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NATIONAL REVIEW

Liberal Fascism

The Secret History of the American Left from Mussolini to the Politics of Meaning

JONAH GOLDBERG

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NATIONAL REVIEW

JANUARY 28, 2008 VOL. LX, NO. 1

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■ COVER STORY

A Half Century's Slander

A stack of recent books have branded Bush, Cheney, Republicans, conservatives, the Christian Right, and, of course, "neocons" as fascists, Nazis, or sympathizers with fascism and Nazism. Even after 9/11, it seems liberals think the fascist Right is America's real, and only, existential threat. This received wisdom is understandably vexing for conservatives, who have never had a kind word for fascists or Nazis. It's high time we conservatives set the record straight. *By Jonah Goldberg*

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letters to the editor

TRICK OR TREAT

Jay Nordlinger's article on the Presidential Medal of Freedom ("A Tasty Presidential Perk," December 17) was very informative but failed to mention President George W. Bush's lowest moment in awarding these medals: his obsequious presentation of that highest civilian honor to Muhammad Ali. Ali was a man who never did a thing for his country, a Vietnam refusenik who famously had "no quarrel with them Viet Cong." It was no small affront that the retiring Gen. Richard B. Myers had to be awarded his medal at the very same ceremony.

Thomas McCord
Salinas, Calif.

WHAT IF HE WINS?

Your endorsement of Governor Romney ("Romney for President," December 31) has left me a little cold. You disqualify Mayor Giuliani for alienating social conservatives, but Romney is sure to suffer a similar deficit in their ranks. Giuliani, at least, has had the courage to acknowledge this disagreement and has offered to appoint conservative judges. You say Governor Huckabee suffers from a lack of credentials on economic policy and foreign policy, but Romney has no real foreign-policy credentials either. At best, you are endorsing Romney for his economic policy, management ability, and electability.

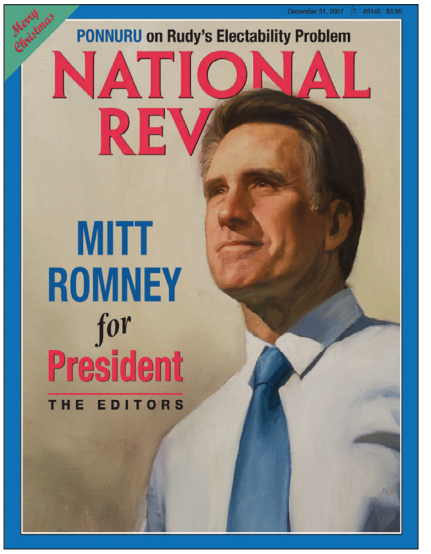
More important, however, is the point that Romney is still an unknown entity. Your endorsement implies confidence that he has not changed positions for political expedience—that you believe you know the man and his policies. I suspect you may be seeing only what you want to see. He'll take you to the dance and end up dancing with someone else.

Tony Rivera
Newark, Del.

APOCALYPSE NOW

There are few things so demonstrative of the End Times as when NATIONAL REVIEW—the last bastion of intellectual conservative thought—publishes five separate endorsements of five separate Republican candidates ("Cases for the Candidates," December 17)—and not one of them is Tom Tancredo, Duncan Hunter, or Ron Paul.

James Toth
Murfreesboro, Tenn.



FATHER MITT

You write in your endorsement of Romney that "we are not electing a pastor." But with the crown of his head obscuring some of the letters on the cover of your December 31 issue, you appear to be championing Romney as our NATIONAL REV. A not-so-subtle hint?

Stephan Marks
New York, N.Y.

NATIONAL REVIEW encourages letters to the editor. Letters can be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com. Please include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters will be edited for space and clarity.

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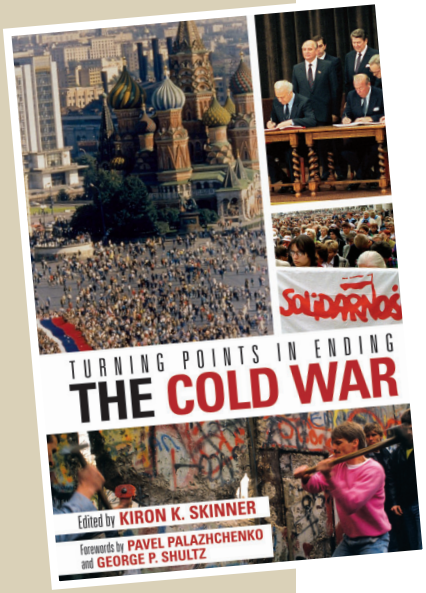
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THE COLD WAR
SOLIDARNOŚĆ
Edited by KIRON K. SKINNER
Forewords by PAVEL PALAZHCHENKO and GEORGE P. SHULTZ

Turning Points in Ending the Cold War

EDITED BY KIRON K. SKINNER

Twenty years ago, in the early 1980s, no one could have imagined that only a decade later the cold war would be over. How did it happen? The essays in this collection offer illuminating insights into the key players–Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin, and others–and the monumental events that led to the collapse of communism.

The expert contributors examine the end of détente and the beginning of the new phase of the cold war in the early 1980s, Reagan's radical new strategies aimed at changing Soviet behavior, the peaceful democratic revolutions in Poland and Hungary, the events that brought about the reunification of Germany, the role of events in Third World countries, the critical contributions of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, and more.

Kiron K. Skinner, is an associate professor of international relations at Carnegie Mellon University and a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. She is a coauthor of the *New York Times* bestsellers, *Reagan, in His Own Hand: The Writings of Ronald Reagan that Reveal His Revolutionary Vision of America* (with Annelise Anderson and Martin Anderson, 2001) and *Reagan, a Life in Letters* (with Annelise Anderson and Martin Anderson, 2003).

Contributors: Alexei Arbatov, Karen Brutents, Anatoli Chernaiev, Oleg Grinevsky, David Holloway, Robert L. Hutchings, Jack F. Matlock Jr., Michael McFaul, Georgi I. Mirski, Pavel Palazhchenko, Nikolai Petrov, Condoleezza Rice, Peter W. Rodman, George P. Shultz, Philip Zelikow, Vladislav Zubok.

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THE WEEK

■ The news out of New Hampshire: Hillary cried, Obama died.

■ The Republican presidential candidates' debates over immigration have been marked by an obsessive focus on third- and fourth-order questions: What tuition rate should state colleges charge illegal-immigrant students? Is it fair to call McCain's proposal an "amnesty"? (He once used the word himself, before he decided it was a slander.) McCain now claims to "get it"—to understand that Washington must prove it can enforce the law before the public will allow it to grant legal status to illegal immigrants or to invite new "guest workers" here. What he truly "gets" is the need for better PR. He would make amnesty wait until border-state governors certify that the border is secure. But McCain knows that many illegals come here legally and overstay their visas. We would thus be legalizing our illegal population while adding new illegals to await the next amnesty. Giuliani essentially sides with McCain. The good news is that both men have come out for deporting the 2 million illegal immigrants who have committed crimes. That is the right priority, and could form some common ground for Republicans. But if the federal government has not had the will or capacity to deport them already, it will not do so while simultaneously putting 10 million other illegals on a path to citizenship and setting up a guest-worker program. Deport the worst offenders first, while tightening enforcement across the board; defer the other policy debates until later. Romney and Thompson appear to see the lesson: Washington needs to build its credibility, not shoot for a "comprehensive reform."

■ Parties and partisanship get a bad rap from the wise and the good. Healthy parties engage voters, channel emotions and ideas, and bring about change, some of it needed. (The era in which the parties were weakest—1830–55—reflected the nation's unwillingness to address the problem of slavery.) So it is no surprise that a bipartisan summit at the University of Oklahoma did not impress. Among the big-name guests were many has-beens (former senator Gary Hart, former governor Christine Todd Whitman) and a failed wannabe (Sen. Chuck Hagel). The guest who could publicize their discontents was billionaire New York mayor Michael Bloomberg. Bloomberg has been an acceptable mayor, continuing Rudy Giuliani's crime-busting. He is also an arrogant scold, waging war on cigarettes and trans fats. If he were to seek the presidency as an independent, he would get creamed—he has the personality of a frozen fish—but his copious ads could make mischief for whichever party he chose to target. Thus a non-partisan candidate might make negative campaigning more important than ever.

■ Appearing on Jay Leno's show, Huckabee got off what everybody said was a really good line, even a *killer* line. What he said

ROMAN GENN

was, "People are looking for a presidential candidate who reminds them more of the guy they work with rather than the guy that laid them off." He was alluding to Romney. According to a mature view, this is a very depressing line, its deplorable grammar aside. (Isn't Huck supposed to be silver-tongued?) It expresses a low populism, the kind that belongs in the Democratic party, if anywhere, not in the Republican. And are we now to campaign on the basis of looks? Okay, we'll play along: To us, Romney looks like a guy who can create jobs, create businesses, and create wealth—who can make the economy go, so that people like Mike Huckabee can spend their lives preachin', gettin' votes, taxin' folks, and demagoguin'. There are reasons to oppose Romney; resentment of his looks, well-being, and success is not one of them.

■ George McGovern wrote an essay for the *Washington Post* calling for the impeachment of President Bush and Vice President Cheney. Most of it was a predictable anti-war aria: Saddam's Iraq was "a stable country with little or no capacity to threaten others"; Bush and Cheney have "increased the terrorist threat" (which is why we have had so many more 9/11s). But he also wants Bush/Cheney impeached for Hurricane Katrina, and

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The Week...

for *Bush* v. *Gore* and the "questionable" 2000 election "that probably should have been officially challenged—perhaps even by a congressional investigation." McGovern has lived so long, and is so sweet-natured when politics is not on the table, that he has become a cuddly old fud, a great-avuncular Mr. Magoo. But sometimes he speaks to the issues, and you remember why he carried one state in 1972, and finished fifth in the New Hampshire primary in 1984.

■ In 2002, the CIA made a serious error in tape-recording early interrogations of two notorious terrorists. The men were subjected to tough tactics, probably including waterboarding. Fearing that the tapes might be leaked, in 2005 the head of the CIA's operations directorate ordered them destroyed. Now that act has prompted a criminal probe to determine whether justice was obstructed. This seems highly unlikely. The treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay has become an issue in court, but the treatment of high-level terrorists in secret CIA custody has not. Still, an investigation such as the one attorney general Michael Mukasey has set up is warranted. Rejecting Democratic calls for an independent prosecutor, he appointed a well-regarded federal attorney to run the inquiry under Justice Department supervision. This arrangement ensures that there will be no Valerie Plame–type witch hunt, and that if there is a difficult call to make, Mukasey will be accountable for it. Plainly, if CIA officials intentionally misled tribunals about the existence of the tapes, that is a serious matter. But we hope the Justice Department remembers that the nation is at war. If the destruction of the tapes merely denied the enemy a propaganda tool, that is grounds for plaudits, not indictments.

■ While commentators are debating the causes and cures of our economic slowdown, the slowdown hasn't gone to the trouble of actually arriving. Slow consumption growth in September and

Who's Afraid of $100 a Barrel?

On July 26, 1956, Egypt decided to nationalize the Suez Canal. Within a few months, Britain, France, and Israel attacked, and thrust the world's most important oil-producing region into turmoil. With the superhighway for their oil tankers shut, oil producers cut production by 1.7 million barrels a day in November, roughly a 10 percent decrease in world oil production. Oil prices surged, and the economy dipped into recession in 1957.

Looking back at U.S. economic history, it is remarkable how many U.S. recessions followed an almost identical script. In 1973, it was the oil embargo. In 1980, the Iran–Iraq War caused world oil production to drop 7.2 percent. In 1981 there was a recession. Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, and a recession again followed. In each of these episodes, the driving force turning Middle Eastern turmoil into American economic dismay was the price of oil.

With this long experience in mind, it is natural that the media would treat the recent advance of the price of oil above $100 per barrel as the last straw in a series of economic misfortunes. Think of the U.S. economy as the mad monk Rasputin, with the sea of expensive oil replacing the icy river that finally delivered the already shot, clubbed, and poisoned monk to his maker.

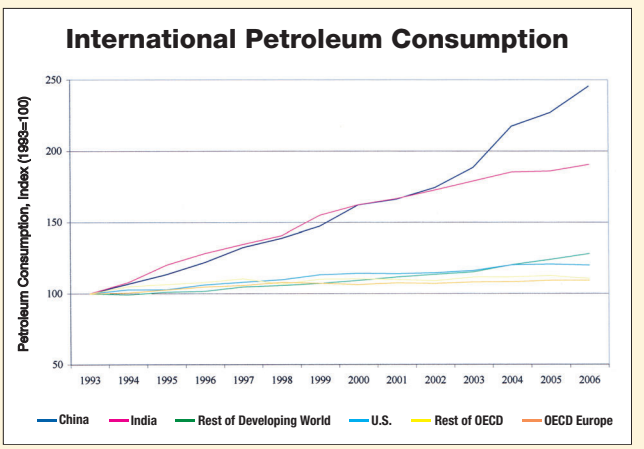
Except that the oil story is much different this time around: There is every reason to expect that high energy prices will do far less harm to the U.S. economy than they have in the past.

The reason is apparent in the attached chart. It shows the relative increase in oil demand for many of the world's countries. For the large developed countries, including the U.S., oil demand has inched up only a smidgen in recent years. But the world's less-developed nations, especially China and India, have ratcheted up their consumption year after year. The size of this increase is astonishing, with China, for example, increasing its oil consumption a whopping 146 percent from 1993 to 2006.

Increasing demand puts pressure on supply and drives up prices just as effectively as a supply disruption. But when supply is disrupted, as it was by war in 1956, it is unambiguously bad news. When high demand drives up prices, on the other hand, the story is more ambiguous. Less-developed nations are driving up the price of oil because they are growing so much, but that growth produces higher incomes, and a swarm of new customers for the products produced by developed nations.

We often think that countries compete the way companies do, but the world doesn't work that way. When the rest of the world is reeling, our growth is lower and our recessions worse. With oil less and less important to our economy, its high price might even be good news.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



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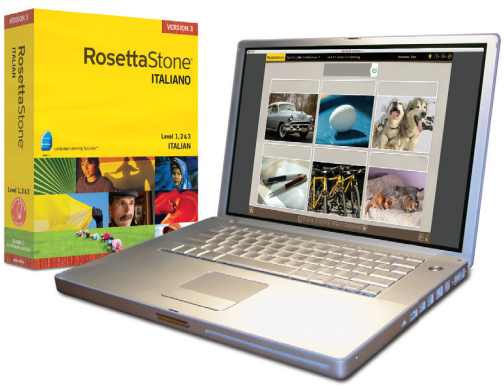

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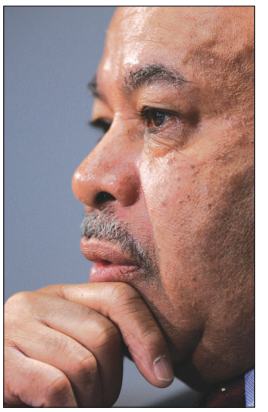
The Week...

October helped to scare the Fed into another rate cut on December 11. The mortgage crisis was obviously to blame. Three days later, the September and October numbers were revised upward, and November's booming numbers were released. It is a recurring pattern. Alarms were sounded when the government reported that the economy had lost 4,000 jobs in August. It now appears that the economy *expanded* by 93,000 jobs that month. The economic consultants at First Trust Advisors conclude: "The Fed is not tight, tax rates are still low, productivity is still strong, wages, incomes, and profit margins are still robust, and, after revisions, the U.S. economy has proven its resilience time and time again." Not all is rosy, of course. There seems to be some weakness in the job market for workers aged 16 to 24: an entirely predictable result of this summer's increase in the minimum wage. All in all, it seems that overreactions in Washington are the chief threat to the economy.

■ Nations that have permitted large-scale immigration from the Muslim Middle East have all experienced "honor killings"—the murder, almost invariably of women by men, of those deemed to have departed too far from Muslim social norms. These are, in other words, murders motivated by hatred of assimilation. The recent killings in Texas seem to follow the pattern. The two daughters of 50-year-old Egyptian immigrant Yaser Abdel Said were found shot to death in the taxi Said owned. Friends and relatives have all spoken of Said's distress that his daughters wished to mix with non-Muslims and dress like other young American women. Said himself is nowhere to be found. It would be wrong to make too much of isolated instances like this; yet one cannot help but wonder why people choose to settle in countries whose way of life is so intensely disagreeable to them. There are 49 majority-Muslim nations, covering more than 20 percent of the world's land area. Why move to the U.S., if the mores of the place disgust you?

■ Winston Churchill's description of disarmament negotiations—"a solemn and prolonged farce"—applies equally well to the U.N.'s endless climate-change talks. Despite the prevailing view that doom awaits unless we take drastic action now, the recent Bali conference merely kicked the can down the road. Yet this episode of indecision could work to America's and the world's benefit. After much drama, the U.S. agreed to help draw up measurable, verifiable steps toward reducing greenhouse-gas emissions—but, crucially, the greens' demand of a draconian 25–40 percent reduction by 2020 was omitted. While it might have been even better for the U.S. simply to walk out of Bali, a "stubborn" U.S. position today would let a future Democratic president score points by ostentatiously repudiating the Bush administration. A delay, by contrast, may allow the grim economic realities of greenhouse-gas emissions reductions to overcome the current hysteria. If Congress enacts a modest emissions-reduction plan in 2008 or 2009, it is unlikely the U.S. will commit to a more ambitious U.N. emissions target later. Meanwhile, the U.S. has had the best greenhouse-gas-emissions record in the industrialized world for most of the last decade; and, after rising steadily and noticeably between 1980 and 1998, global temperatures have flattened out. A few more years of this may cause a real crisis—among the climate campaigners.



■ On January 7, a judge in Missouri tossed out an attempt by Democratic officials to rewrite the ballot language of the Missouri Civil Rights Initiative, which will ban racial preferences in state government if voters give it their blessing. It's no wonder that Missouri's liberal secretary of state and attorney general turned to such trickery: When anti-preference measures go before the electorate, as they have in California, Michigan, and Washington, they win by comfortable margins. With this new ruling, the MCRI moves closer to formal ballot qualification, and Ward Connerly's vision of a "Super Tuesday for Equality" on November 4 comes closer to reality. Connerly's goal is to sponsor referenda not only in Missouri, but also in Arizona, Colorado, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. He's likely to win wherever he gets his words on the ballot, so there will almost certainly be further desperate efforts by the racial bean counters to make sure that doesn't happen.

■ Rochester Cathedral in southern England is a thousand years old, and its bishop, Dr. Michael Nazir-Ali, is a remarkable man, a thoughtful intellectual worthy of the historic diocese he represents. Back in the bishop's native Pakistan—a country where apostates from Islam risk being put to death—his father converted to Christianity. In matters pertaining to Islam, Bishop Nazir-Ali knows at first hand what he is speaking about, but in the current climate it requires courage to be even slightly critical of anything to do with Muslims. In a recent article in the *Sunday Telegraph*, the bishop said that while multiculturalism may have been a well-intentioned idea, it is in practice setting Muslims apart from the British, which is wrong and dangerous. Growth in immigrant numbers, the ideology of Islamic extremism, and the ubiquitous mosques with their repeated calls to prayer are intimidating (his word), so much so that parts of big cities are no-go areas. Add the secularism of the majority into this mix, and "it is now less possible for Christianity to be the public faith in Britain." Unless there is a spiritual revival, he warns, the Christian cause may well be lost. The gravity of the situation may be judged by the rush of politicians and Muslim spokesmen to denounce the bishop.

■ *Umshini wam, mshini wam / Khawuleth'umshini wam* . . . The lyrics of the song are in the Zulu language. They translate as: "My machine, my machine, please bring my machine," where the device referred to is understood to be a machine gun (though we are told there is a salacious subtext). This is the theme song of a South African politician, Jacob Zuma, who has just been elected president of the African National Congress, his country's dominant political party. Zuma's election was humiliating for Thabo Mbeki, who, though still president of the coun-

CONNERLY: JOHN R. McQUITCHEN/ZUMA

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New advanced portable heater can cut your heating bill up to 50%

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A new advanced quartz infrared portable heater, the EdenPURE®, can cut your heating bills by up to 50%.

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Q. What is the origin of this amazing heating element in the EdenPURE®?

A. This advanced heating element was discovered accidentally by a man named John Jones.

Q. What advantages does infrared quartz tube heating source have over other heating source products?

A. John Jones designed his heating source around the three most important consumer benefits: economy, comfort, and safety.

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Cannot start a fire; a child or animal can touch or sit on it without harm

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Q. How can a person cut their heating bill by up to 50% with the EdenPURE®?

A. The EdenPURE® will heat a room in minutes. Therefore, you can turn the heat down in your house to as low as 50 degrees, but the room you are occupying, which has the EdenPURE®, will be warm and comfortable. The EdenPURE® is portable. When you move to another room, it will quickly heat that room also. This can drastically cut heating bills, in some instances, by up to 50%.

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End of interview.

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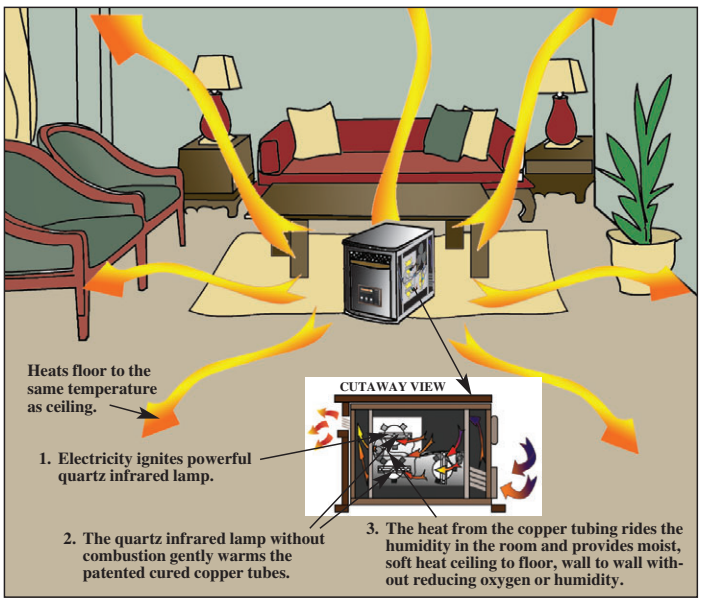
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The Week...

try, is now no longer the leader of his party. The word "colorful" does not quite do justice to Zuma. With four wives and at least 18 children, he describes himself as a Zulu traditionalist. Once a deputy president of South Africa, he was dismissed following corruption charges in 2005. The following year, he was tried for, but acquitted of, rape. He is currently under investigation on new corruption charges. If he survives those charges, he will be well placed to be the next president of South Africa in 2009. All together now: *Umshini wam, mshini wam* . . .

■ Kenya, long seen as one of the more stable and promising African nations, now seems intent on traveling a dismal road. The December 27 elections, in which incumbent president Mwai Kibaki was elected to a second five-year term, are widely regarded as having been rigged. The principal losing candidate, Raila Odinga, brought his supporters out on the streets in protest, and matters quickly got out of control. As we go to press 13 days later, 600 Kenyans are believed dead, and some 200,000 are "homeless": which is to say, victims of ethnic cleansing. In one ghastly incident, up to 50 people died when the church in which they had taken sanctuary was burned by a mob. Tribalism underlies the horrors. Kibaki belongs to the Kikuyu, Kenya's "market-dominant minority": the biggest and most successful of the country's 40-odd tribes. Odinga is a Luo (as, incidentally, was Barack Obama's father) but draws support from other groups resentful of Kikuyu arrogance and success. In Africa, goes the old quip, politics begins with a soapbox, proceeds to a ballot box, and ends with a cartridge box—and we now have one more demonstration of this sad truth.

■ Do you remember the Franklin Prophecy? Has it ever been peddled to you? This is an old hoax, though not as old as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The Franklin Prophecy was invented in the 1930s, by anti-Semites in America. It holds that Benjamin Franklin gave a speech at the Constitutional Convention, warning that, unless Jews were excluded from America, they would overrun the country. The hoax has been disproved many, many times. But like other such tricks, it lives on, working its way into bloodstreams around the world. Needless to say, it has a home in the Middle East. The other day, a Syrian cleric was on al-Jazeera, preaching the Franklin Prophecy. He cited Lyndon LaRouche for good measure. *Les beaux esprits se rencontrent*. Helping Muslims to rescue themselves from lunacy, and murderous lunacy, is one of the imperatives of our time.

■ If you think American universities are uniquely bad, take heart: They're not so hot in Israel, either. We were arrested by a recent headline: "Heb. U. Paper Finds: IDF Has Political Motives for Not Raping." Oh? A grad student at Hebrew University set out to discover why Israeli soldiers don't rape women under their control. Rape by conquering armies has been a plague from time immemorial. Is it that Israeli soldiers happen not to be rapists? No, not really. Have a little of this paper: "The lack of organized military rape is an alternate [*sic*] way of realizing political goals. In the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, it can be seen that the lack of military rape merely strengthens the ethnic boundaries and clarifies the inter-ethnic differences—just as organized military rape would have done." The news report under the headline we've quoted says, "The paper further theorizes that Arab women in Judea and Samaria are not raped by IDF soldiers because the women are de-humanized in the soldiers' eyes." Do you know the expression, "Can't win for losin'"? The only reason we bother to mention this pissant "research paper" is that it won a university prize. You can laugh or you can cry—but you must pause now and then to consider the sicknesses of democratic civilization.

■ Who knew that amateur soccer could have anything in common with Islamic terrorism? An Italian club has named itself in honor of Hezbollah, hoping to capture "the strong fighting spirit" of the Party of God. According to Al-Manar TV, Hezbollah's mouthpiece (and a terrorist entity in itself), the team has made a play on its captain's name, Zasso, and is now Zassbollah. They even wear a patch with the green-and-yellow emblem of the Lebanese terrorist group. Makes a certain amount of sense, no? As one player had it, "On the field, we must put up resistance and fight the opponents." But where are the massive protests stirred by this petty invocation of Allah's name? Don't expect much: Support for terror, in any incarnation, just doesn't seem to bother those to Al-Manar born.

■ Good news out of China: They are expelling people from the Communist party for violating the one-child policy. Why "good news"? Well, we always like to see the ranks of Communist parties reduced, but the main point is that these people are being merely expelled: not imprisoned, tortured, or killed. Or at least that is the implication of recent reports. Of course, other violators of the one-child policy are enduring the usual hell: massive fines, forced abortions, and—if they dare to protest—prison.

KRISTOL: ALEX WONG/GETTY

■ The *New York Times*'s decision to make Bill Kristol a regular columnist on its op-ed page was met with the predictable chorus of left-wing boos and catcalls. To the typical *New York Times* reader, inviting the editor of *The Weekly Standard* and a leading advocate of the troop surge in Iraq to opine on the same page as Paul Krugman, Frank Rich, and Maureen Dowd is an affront. They are reacting as though the *Times* had just made Larry the Cable Guy editor of the Style section. *Times* editorial-page editor Andy Rosenthal defended his decision by saying, "The idea that the *New York Times* is giving voice to a guy who is a serious, respected conservative intellectual—and somehow that's a bad thing. . . . How intolerant is that?" We are surprised that he is surprised. Left-wing talk about "diversity" has long applied only to race, gender, etc. For campuses, bureaucracies, and newspapers, ideological homogeneity is preferred.

■ On January 3, to greet the New Year, the *Times* printed a letter to the editor. "As a lifelong Republican until the candidacy

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The Week...

of George W. Bush, I am ashamed and disgusted by the loss of values and the general apathy this country has sunk into. . . . We have allowed this administration to lie, cheat and break the law. . . . [signed] Henry A. Lowenstein, New York." Pretty standard stuff for *Times* letter writers. But what about that auto-ID, "lifelong Republican"? The magic of Internet searching revealed that the *Times* had published 20 letters by Henry A. Lowenstein since 2003. In May 2003 he wrote about "the folly of tax cuts." In February 2004 he praised John Kerry. In August 2005 he slammed "the administration's constituents, the super rich." Yup, that's the party of Reagan all right. It's not against the law to say you're a lifelong Republican when you're not, but it is lying; and it's not even that for the *Times* to publish 20 letters by the same bot, but it does show a lack of imagination.

■ In an annual tradition that remains mystifyingly important, *Time* magazine named Vladimir Putin its person of the year for 2007. While the selection of Putin can perhaps be justified given the threat he presents to Russian democracy, there was a far more deserving candidate: Gen. David Petraeus. He executed a brilliant counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq and then defended that strategy in the court of public opinion, suffering calumnious personal attacks in the process. MoveOn.org called him a liar and traitor, and Sen. Hillary Clinton, currently auditioning to be the general's commander-in-chief, said reports of Petraeus's progress required a "willing suspension of disbelief." Through all this, Petraeus was poised, confident, and persuasive. Of course, acknowledging his achievement would amount to admitting that the war might not be lost after all. Is this more than the editors of *Time* can bear?

■ Probably most of our readers have by now encountered the Compact Fluorescent Lightbulb (CFL), that annoying helical replacement for the traditional bulb. CFLs are slow to come on, do not respond to dimmer switches, emit low buzzing sounds, collide with your lampshades, make you come out green in photographs, and contain enough mercury to make disposal an environmental issue. It is therefore not surprising to learn that Congress has made CFLs mandatory—at any rate, our legislators have passed, and our president signed, an energy bill setting energy-efficiency standards for light bulbs that traditional bulbs cannot meet. The new standards will phase in over two years, 2012 to 2014, after which the U.S. will be a flickering, buzzing, green-tinted city on a hill. Remember the low-flush toilets mandated by the 1992 energy bill? The ones that have a 1.6-gallon tank in place of the old 3.5-gallon one, thereby saving water? Except that you have to flush the darn thing three times to get the job done? Until in desperation you track down the one plumber in your town who can get and install a contraband 3.5-gallon flusher for you? You'd better hope that plumber has a brother who's an electrician.

■ Last month former senator George Mitchell issued a stern report on what he called "baseball's steroid era"—a period of pervasive illegal drug use. The report implicates more than 80 players, including MVPs. Some players deny the charges. Pitching great Roger Clemens has sued his former trainer for fingering him, claiming that he took painkillers and vitamin B-12 only. But any medically savvy fan could spot the trend toward bulking up. Baseball had been limping from sagging attendance. It needed a shot in the arm, and that's what a lot of players got, while coaches and league higher-ups looked the other way. Commissioner Bud Selig has promised action, and Congress has scheduled hearings. Only the glory of the game itself, and its capacity to allure and excite, will save it from this dirty scuffing.

■ On a ranking of sound life-management principles, "Don't fool with large hungry tigers" would seem to us to be pretty near the top. Three young men in San Francisco apparently did not know this elementary rule. On Christmas Day all three were mauled by a tiger that had escaped from its enclosure at the city's zoo; one of them died. Witnesses say that the young men had been taunting the big cat. The *New York Post* reported that slingshots had been found on the young men's persons, and police found an empty vodka bottle in their car. Whatever the case, the story appeals to deep psychic fears. Getting eaten by a large carnivore must have been a common experience for our paleolithic ancestors. The fates of Antigonus in *The Winter's Tale*, of little Albert Ramsbottom in Marriott Edgar's poem, and of the 42 youths who unwisely mocked Elisha's baldness in 2 Kings, testify to a deep uneasiness. That the two survivors have got lawyered up with star attorney Mark Geragos (formerly engaged by Michael Jackson, Gary Condit, Scott Peterson, and Susan McDougal) testifies to their hopes of a big fat settlement from the zoo. The tiger was shot.

■ Those who are planted in the house of the Lord, promised the Psalmist, will be "fat and flourishing." Well, we are. Apart from a few Pacific islands, in fact, the U.S. is the fattest nation in the world. The Trust for America's Health, a Washington think tank, has crunched the numbers (without, one hopes, swallowing them) in its fourth annual report on the national girth. Fattest state: Mississippi. Leanest: Colorado. The report confirms what our eyes tell us: The poor are fatter than the rich, the black fatter than the white, and the female fatter than the male. Something must be done! "The federal government should develop and implement a National Strategy to Combat Obesity," brays the report. As opposed, presumably, to letting citizens decide for themselves how much embonpoint they want to carry around. Or perhaps this is just some clever shilling on behalf of a Huckabee-Bloomberg ticket?

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2008

Process of Elimination

Our endorsement of Mitt Romney in the last issue concluded with a note about "this most fluid and unpredictable Republican field." Since then, the race has gotten still more unpredictable (and not only on the Republican side). From June through early December, the leading Republicans in national polls were Rudolph Giuliani and Fred Thompson. Neither placed in the top two in the first big contest, the Iowa caucuses, or in the top three in the second one, the New Hampshire primary.

Instead, candidates who were widely written off last summer won them. Mike Huckabee and John McCain persevered, and deserve congratulations for their wins. But the race remains wide open. It is possible, if only just barely in some cases, to see Giuliani, Huckabee, McCain, or Romney winning the nomination. Sadly, the same cannot be said of Thompson.

Because we believe both social and economic conservatism are important, as is the coalition that sustains them, we do not favor Giuliani or Huckabee. That leaves McCain and Romney.

McCain has shown himself to be a strong candidate, but his conservatism is in some question. Not, of course, with respect to the Iraq war, where he has been prescient and steadfast. But he could go further to ease conservatives' doubts on other issues, particularly as he starts to compete in more conservative states. He should be able to do so without violating his conscience.

He continues to support a "comprehensive immigration reform" that includes a guest-worker program and legalizes most illegal immigrants. But he says that enforcement should come first. He should agree to enact an enforcement bill first, and then to try for separate legislation on his other initiatives after enforcement has had time to work. He announced his support for federal funding of embryo-destructive stem-cell research when it looked like alternative types of research were not as promising. Now they are, and he should acknowledge that the case for that funding is weaker. It would also be reassuring if he pointed to respected legal conservatives who would be involved in picking judges for him.

Romney has a different challenge. He is to McCain's right on everything from taxes to immigration to stem cells. His problem is that he has yet to truly connect with voters, many of whom still see him as inauthentic. But his message in New Hampshire--as the conservative turn-around artist who wants to fix Washington--suited him, even if he came up short. He will need to win the argument about the economy, which will require talking about it more and with more emphasis on middle-class families. (Amazingly, McCain trounced him in New Hampshire among voters who care most about the economy.)

One bright spot is that both McCain and Romney were able to appeal to independent voters, where the Republican party badly needs to improve its showing. We want Romney to win the nomination, but what we want even more is for conservatives and independents to form a center-right majority capable of governing this country wisely.

2008 II

Cage Fight

Hillary Clinton came out of New Hampshire a winner—but only because she narrowly avoided being a loser: not the position the world expected her to be in even a month ago. Expect a long, WWF-like struggle ahead.

All of Clinton's weaknesses seemed to catch up with her in Iowa, landing her in third place. Her robotic stump presence was especially off-putting in a retail state. She has been in the national eye for 16 years, and promises a political cycle—Bush/Clinton/Bush/Clinton—that would be longer yet. It was all right for medieval England to have a dynastic War of the Roses, but modern America? Her effort to say that she had more experience than her main opponents—eight years in the Senate, eight years as FLOTUS—was pitched to the wrong party: Republicans like their old hands, Democrats like to kill them.

Barack Obama, the surprise Iowa winner, was everything she was not. He was young and fresh, articulate on the page and on the stump. He spoke the language of change, one of those uplifting themes that, whether they feed the soul or offer a thought-snack, do satisfy, if only temporarily. The Obama surge was also an unanticipated effect of the Iraq surge: If the war is going well enough to be off the TV screens, then personality and uplift might be more salient.

Perhaps Clinton's tears on the eve of the New Hampshire primary solidified the women's vote for her. More likely, Granite Staters given the chance to propel Barack Obama to the White House paused to reflect that he is, politically, twelve years old.

Obama profited, finally, from his race—not from the votes of blacks (Iowa has hardly any) but from the votes of whites yearning to support a presentable black candidate. This is an honorable impulse, given American history. True, this black man's mother was white and his father was Kenyan, but ethnic political progress in America is often oblique (the first Irish and Italian mayors of New York City were Protestants).

But Clinton managed to win Round Two. She has her own narrative of group progress, and perhaps her tears on the eve of the New Hampshire primary solidified the women's vote for her. More likely, Granite Staters given the chance to propel Barack Obama to the White House paused to reflect that he is, politically, twelve years old. The comparisons with Abraham Lincoln, another Illinois politician with a slender résumé, are grotesque. Lincoln's Senate loss in 1858 was far more meaningful than Obama's win in 2004: Lincoln clashed with Stephen Douglas, the nation's leading Democrat, in debates that are still studied; Obama rolled over Alan Keyes.

We can look forward to a long fight. It will not be pleasant. The ideological near-identity of the two front-runners will make them all the more vicious. The Clinton gang needs no lessons in

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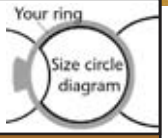

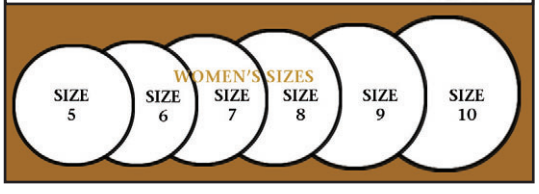

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this regard, and Obama's career will afford them many opportunities. Everyone in America knows everything about Hillary Clinton, but only a handful of political junkies know much about Barack Obama. What, for example, will the nation think of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, the racialist firebrand who is pastor of Obama's Chicago church?

Conservatives will be tempted to pick a candidate who can best counter whichever Democrat seems to be ahead. That should be a factor in our calculations, surely, but a small one. Conservatives must focus on picking the nominee who can address the range of their concerns, and lead the nation in a dangerous world.

PAKISTAN

After Bhutto

WHEN told by aides that he was indispensable, Charles de Gaulle replied: "The graveyards are full of indispensable men." This melancholy truth has recently been tested by the shocking assassination of Benazir Bhutto, who had been recruited to join with Pakistan's current president (and former military ruler), Pervez Musharraf, in a government that would tackle the country's severe and growing problems:

1. Pakistan is a failing state with nuclear weapons—about "sixty city-busting weapons," according to UPI's Arnaud de Borchgrave.

2. Afghanistan is a failed, corrupt narco-state defended from the resurgent Taliban by increasingly nervous NATO allies.

3. Border areas between the two countries are ruled by extreme religious parties that offer sanctuary to the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

4. There is no way such entrenched and locally popular forces can be eliminated without the full support of the Pakistani armed forces.

5. Yet the Pakistani armed forces, in particular the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), are riddled with Islamist sympathizers.

6. Finally, Pakistani public opinion is strongly anti-American, if not pro-jihadist, and would resist a strong campaign to invade the badlands and extirpate the terrorists.

The proposed broad-based Bhutto-Musharraf coalition was supposed to respond to this situation by purging both the military and the ISI of Islamist officers, and by launching military operations against the established terrorists in the border badlands. Bhutto's murder destroys this coalition and delays the adoption of these policies. In addition, it has provoked rumors that President Musharraf was an accomplice to the murder and, more generally, it has heightened political passions in the run-up to the election.

Musharraf acted quickly and sensibly to calm down this volatile mix of problems by postponing national elections from January 8 to February 18. That was prudent but, alas, but the new date may still be too soon. It is not certain that the British police inquiries—soundly commissioned by Musharraf—into the Bhutto assassination will be complete by then. The Brits should hold the inquiry as quickly as is compatible with its integrity, but even if it exonerates Musharraf while establishing who really killed Bhutto, many Pakistanis will support candidates hostile to any coalition with Musharraf.

Will Musharraf have any partners for a coalition against jihadism? Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who leads what may now be the main opposition party, seems to calculate that he has a better chance of lasting power as an ally of the religious parties against the president. The U.S. may be able to press him into a coalition by pressuring his Saudi backers, but Sharif and Musharraf are bitter personal enemies. It is unlikely that such a coalition would last or achieve any serious benefit.

Musharaff may well be damaged goods, but he is also an American ally in the War on Terror.

Bhutto's own Pakistan Peoples Party is in some disarray. Benazir bequeathed the leadership of the PPP to her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, who is using the assassination to move away from his wife's commitment to an anti-jihadist coalition. Zardari could be won over to Musharraf following an election, but it might make more sense for both Musharraf and the U.S. to encourage new leaders in the PPP to either challenge the hereditary rulers or form a breakaway party. But those decisions can wait until the electoral results are clear.

Even without strong allies in parliament, Musharraf can probably still rely on the support of the army as the single strongest institution in Pakistan. His successor as army head, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, is an ally, but his principal loyalty will be to the army's reputation. Will this lead him to ease out Musharraf and encourage a government more palatable to the new parliament? Unless the new parliament looks capable of sustained stable government—and that seems unlikely—Kayani will almost certainly stick with his old ally.

Musharaff may well be damaged goods, but he is also an American ally in the War on Terror who took some bold actions such as ordering the army assault on the extremist Red Mosque earlier this year. He lacked the broad political support needed to purge the army and mount sustained operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in the badlands.

As Conor Cruise O'Brien has often pointed out, however, it is unreasonable to blame a man for not doing what he can't do. It makes sense to change the environment or the incentives rather than the man. That is what the U.S. should do: Make clear that while we would like to encourage a return to democratic government in Pakistan, we think this a lower priority than supporting a stable government willing to take on the jihadists both in the ISI and on the Afghan border. A continuation of the state of emergency, lightly enforced, is something we can tolerate until the parliamentarians are willing to deal seriously with the legal president.

Democracy is the cherry on this particular cake—and we're still kneading the flour.

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■ 2008 ■

McCain Ascendant

As conservatism declines . . .

RAMESH PONNURU

Nashua, N.H.

John McCain lost the fight for the Republican nomination in 2000 because he was too far left for his party. He's moved farther left since, yet this time he could very well win. It is a season of political instability in both parties.

Since his 2000 campaign, McCain has broken with conservatives on issue after issue. He cosponsored legislation with Ted Kennedy and John Edwards to regulate HMOs and with Joe Lieberman to cap greenhouse-gas emissions. He moved left on taxes, too, voting against Bush's tax cuts, although he later came back to the fold.

Immigration, stem cells, the treatment of detainees in the War on Terror, and a federal marriage amendment were not burning issues in 2000; McCain and most conservatives are on opposite sides of all of them. He is said to have flirted with switching parties.

New Hampshire has been turning more liberal in recent years, and McCain courted independent voters in its primary. So he highlighted, rather than downplayed, these heterodoxies. In town-hall meetings, he talked a lot about how he would fight global warming.

Not always terribly cogently. If global warming is a myth and we fight it, he says, we will still leave our kids a cleaner world. If it is real and we don't fight it, we risk catastrophe. This version of Pascal's Wager makes sense if the fight is cost-free, and that's how McCain presents it: "I will not ask you to shiver in the dark as president of the United States," he says. Fair enough. When I press him on the question later, though, he suggests that his plan will reduce both the consumption and the price of oil, which is nearly impossible.

For conservatives, meanwhile, his trump card is the war in Iraq. He says that he alone had the foresight, judgment, and independence to see that the Bush-Rumsfeld strategy was failing and call for the strategy that is working now. It's true, and it is a way of reaching conservatives while separating himself from Bush. Independent voters may not agree with McCain on the war, but they appreciate his willingness to speak his mind.

McCain knows that even in New Hampshire's non-conservative electorate, his support for "comprehensive immigration reform" is a sore spot. He defends himself by claiming that he never advocated amnesty, and by quoting his supporter Joe Lieberman, who says the accusation that he did is a lie. He says border-state governors will have to certify that we have illegal crossings under control before he will start a guest-worker program or let illegal immigrants get right with the law.

Both claims are dodgy. McCain was once willing to say he supported "amnesty." Nearly half of illegal immigrants come legally but overstay their visas, and border control will do nothing about them. McCain's friends in the press are not asking probing questions on either point. In the closing days of the New Hampshire campaign, only Tim Russert asked him about his past support for amnesty. McCain didn't really answer. Other reporters didn't pounce.

In this phase of the campaign, the press is largely treating McCain as though his self-portrait were the full truth. He's a man who doesn't pander, or flip-flop, or lie, or run negative campaigns. His supporters in New Hampshire draw a sharp contrast to Romney. "He never panders," one of them tells me at a post-debate rally in Manchester. The grain of truth here is that there really are issues where McCain

ROMAN GENN

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bucks all political pressures, and he can be unusually forthright in telling voters when he disagrees with them.

Of course he has flip-flopped, dissembled, pandered, and gone negative. He kept telling his town-hall audiences that candidates can't buy New Hampshire, which is a twofer: He flatters them and takes a shot at Romney. He pretends he opposed the Bush tax cuts only because they were not paired with spending cuts. He also thought they were too skewed to the rich, but that's not an aspect of his record he wants Republican primary voters to know about.

In Hudson, N.H., one man asks McCain why we couldn't get bin Laden. He answers, "I will follow him to the gates of Hell, and I'll get him, and I'll bring him to justice." The press would ask any other candidate how he could make that guarantee. If another candidate said, "I'm gonna give you a cleaner planet, I promise you that," as McCain does in Hanover, reporters would find it a little grandiose. He can get away with it—especially in New Hampshire, which pits the Republican the media most love against the one they most hate, and where even the state's conservative newspaper, the *Union Leader*, is supporting him.

Go to McCain's town-hall meetings, or talk to him in a small group, and it is easy to see why people like him. In Hudson, he admits that after his defeat in the 2000 primaries he spent a while feeling sorry for himself, and rather enjoyed it. How many other politicians would say that? In a packed hall in Peterborough, a woman asks him why HIV-positive patients should have to wait until they have full-blown AIDS to get help from Medicaid. He says, candidly, that he doesn't know much about the issue. He lets a representative from the group "One," which fights malaria, AIDS, and global poverty, grab a mike to make his pitch—something he does at any stop to which the group has sent someone.

In Peterborough, a man asks him why nobody is talking about population control any more. Before answering that he is "intent on saving lives and economic development," McCain says that, "with all due respect, sir, that's the old Club of Rome theory." He is referring to a best-selling 1972 environmentalist manifesto about the "limits to growth." I am impressed, thinking that none of the other Republican candidates are likely to be familiar with it. Maybe it is just a reflection of his age, and a reminder that he was a Reaganite back in the day.

He doesn't look old, at least in comparison with Wilford Brimley, who is campaigning for him. But he *is* old. And there is something old-fashioned about McCain. The invocations of honor. The slightly stilted language: He addresses crowds as "dear friends." The ancient jokes. I like all of it. But for all of his appearances on MTV, he runs the risk of looking like a character from another age.

There is something old-fashioned about McCain. The invocations of honor. The slightly stilted language: He addresses crowds as 'dear friends.' The ancient jokes. I like all of it.

The weekend before the New Hampshire primaries, there weren't many conservatives in the crowds that came out for McCain—or, if there were, they didn't speak up. Questioners were more likely to ask him to create a new Department of Peace (answer: "With all due respect, I am against any further expansion of the federal government") than to get rid of regulations.

If the McCain of 2000 was too liberal to win, why should the more-liberal McCain of 2008 have a shot? One answer is that last time he was up against a candidate, Bush, who was to his right and had the backing of the party establishment. None of McCain's current competitors fits that description.

The deeper answer is that the country has moved left over the last eight years, except on guns and abortion, and the Republican party has been dragged along in its tow. Perhaps President Bush deserves a lot of the blame for this drift, or perhaps not. But the contrast to Ronald Reagan, who made the country much more conservative, is undeniable. McCain's success is the flipside of Bush's failure. **NR**

■ 2008 II

'A Magical Communicator'

He's no man for details—but Huck knows how to connect

BYRON YORK

Windham, N.H.

"If I win New Hampshire, it's because I did this show," Mike Huckabee told David Letterman's audience during an appearance on the *Late Show* on the eve of the New Hampshire primary. "If I lose New Hampshire, it's because I did this show."

Huckabee, of course, didn't win New Hampshire. But he came in third—a respectable showing, especially for someone whose support in the state, at the beginning of September, was not measurable. But Huckabee's quick trip to New York for the Letterman show—at a time when all the other candidates were dashing around from Nashua to Salem to Exeter to Concord—was just one more sign that the former governor of Arkansas is running the most unconventional campaign in the Republican race.

Even now, with his recent successes, Huckabee doesn't have a campaign in the sense that frontrunners have campaigns. There's very little staff, a pretty small press operation, and not a lot of long-term planning. In place of all that, the Huckabee campaign has one thing: Mike Huckabee.

By now, most conservatives who follow politics know of economic conservatives' objections to Huckabee over his record on taxes and spending in Arkansas, and the objections of national-security conservatives to his not-fully-baked ideas on the War on Terror (as expressed in his now-famous *Foreign Affairs* article). But what people who haven't seen Huckabee in action don't realize is the degree to which his supporters simply don't care what the Club for Growth or the Center for Security Policy thinks: They like Mike.

On the Sunday before the New Hamp-

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shire primary, Huckabee travels to the Windham Center School to greet an overflow crowd. (It's an afternoon event; in the morning, Huckabee, the former Baptist preacher, speaks to a new church called The Crossing, but he doesn't tell the press about it.) Before Huckabee appears, I roam around the room, asking people why they're here. Most of the answers boil down to one thing: They think Huckabee is the real deal.

"Huckabee is a man who appears to be honest on the surface and honest on the inside," a man named David, from Tilton, N.H., tells me. David lists Huckabee's position on energy independence as the first thing he likes, and then abortion and gay marriage. But as he talks, he keeps coming back to character. "I think he is morally honest and would never do anything to embarrass the office of president of the United States," he says. A woman named Jennifer, from Laconia, N.H., picks up where David leaves off. "He's got his beliefs, he's got his morals, and he'll stick by them, and that's the most important thing about Mike Huckabee to me," she tells me. A woman from Windham named Ruthanne adds, "It's hard to know someone just by watching a debate or the ads on TV, but I get a sense in here"—she brings her hand to her chest—"when I listen to people, if it's a script or if they are really saying what they believe, and I feel that when I listen to him."

Jason Bedrick, a young New Hampshire state representative who would surely be the president of Lubavitcher Jews for Huckabee, if there were such an organization, tells me he is sold on Huckabee. "When I first met him, back in April, I had no idea who he was," Bedrick says. "I was just blown away by him. I was looking for a full-spectrum conservative. He's a little stronger on the social side than he is on the fiscal side, but going by the William F. Buckley/National Review principle of the most conservative person who can win—well, I see Mitt Romney, who is probably the most full-spectrum conservative, but who is just not doing it, has a kajillion dollars and can't buy love—and Huckabee, with no money, is able to really energize people." Bedrick dismisses what he calls the "foolish" idea that Huckabee's support is limited mostly to evangelical Christians. "I think it's the message that some people in the media want people to think," he says. "His base is a lot more broad than that. I have a lot of Jewish friends who really like Huckabee and what he has to say."

Before Huckabee talks, the crowd hears from Chuck Norris, the actor and martial-arts legend who has become Huckabee's virtual sidekick in the campaign. There's no doubt that some of the people who show up at Huckabee rallies are in fact there to see Norris. Some, the younger ones, want to see the campy Norris of Conan O'Brien's show and "Chuck Norris Facts" on the Internet. The older ones just like Chuck Norris. "Oh, I love Chuck Norris, and that's why I'm going to vote for Huckabee," a woman named Connie from Kingston, N.H., tells me. "I watch all his movies and everything."

Norris brings a decidedly offbeat appeal to the campaign. Having first become famous as a karate champion, he tells the crowd at Windham about a martial-arts school for low-income kids he has started and how it has saved some students from a bad life. Himself the product of a tough childhood in Oklahoma and California, Norris feels the martial arts did that for him, too. And he ties that into Huckabee's oft-repeated campaign proposal to promote arts and music education in schools. "We've got to get the arts back into the schools," Norris tells the crowd. "You think about it, martial arts—it's an *art*. It works both sides of the brain, the logic side, as well as the creative side."

When Huckabee takes the stage, he's his old polished self. But he's also not quite the same candidate who won the Iowa caucuses. A lot has been made of Mitt Romney's transformation after his Iowa defeat—when he began talking constantly about "change"—but Huckabee transformed himself too. In New Hampshire, the man who likes lots of government programs became a card-carrying member of the Leave Us Alone coalition.

"The pursuit of happiness for many Americans is being diminished by a government that thinks that it's our nanny," Huckabee tells the crowd. "It's not just our Uncle Sam, it now wants to be our mommy and our daddy. We need to tell the government that we'll raise our own kids, thank you." The audience begins to applaud. "Leave us alone," Huckabee demands. "Give us our freedom. We'll raise our own families."

Huckabee moves on to the tax system, so badly out of whack, he says, that it needs a "total overhaul—not a little touch of the screwdriver, or a twist of the wrench." His solution, of course, is the Fair Tax. But this is no time for details. If you listened only to Huckabee's stump speeches, you'd have no idea what a Fair Tax might actually involve were it to be enacted.

As always, Huckabee brings up those Republicans who don't believe he is conservative enough—the Wall Street interests. And then are those on the other side. "Some people think I'm too conservative," Huckabee says. "I actually believe in the Second Amendment. I think it means just what it says." He pokes a little fun at those politicians who seek to show their support for gun rights by going hunting, whether they are truly hunters or not. "I like to hunt, too," Huckabee says. (He quite famously bagged a pheasant in Iowa days before the caucuses.) "But the Second Amendment is not about hunting. The Second Amendment is about our freedom. It's about preserving and protecting our families, our lives, and our property, and we have a right to do that, and nobody should infringe upon that right."

In recent days, Huckabee has taken to talking more about his executive experience. Having spent ten and a half years in the Arkansas governor's office, he is the longest-serving executive in the race, Republican or Democrat. He tells people he has been responsible for better schools, better roads, better health care. If he doesn't win this time around, he can use a lot of his stump speech if he wants to run for governor again someday.

But right now, Huckabee's on a roll. In the press section, a young woman who travels with Huckabee, carrying a video camera to record his every public move for one of the television networks, calls him "a magical communicator." Reporters who travel with candidates can become awfully bored by the process—they've heard the speeches over and over, and they can usually tell you what's going to come out of the candidate's mouth next. Such high praise is unusual, but Huckabee has that effect on lots of people. He might not be ready for prime time, but that's where he finds himself. **NR**

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Edward B. Burger is Professor of Mathematics in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Williams College. He earned a B.A. with distinction in Mathematics from Connecticut College (summa cum laude) and his Ph.D. in Mathematics from The University of Texas at Austin. He is the recipient of numerous honors, including the prestigious Chauvenet Prize presented by the Mathematical Association of America, and a variety of teaching awards.

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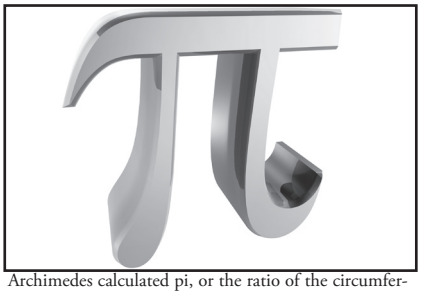

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Archimedes calculated pi, or the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter, as 3.1418.

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■ 2008 III

Right Lines, Wrong Music

What Mitt Romney lacks is the ability to inspire

RICHARD LOWRY

Derry, N.H.

HALFWAY through Mitt Romney's town-hall meeting at a school gym here, a polite, sincere young girl near the front gets the mike. She says she's been trying to ask her question at events for other candidates, but this is the first time she's gotten a chance. Her 26-year-old cousin was hurt in a rugby accident and is paralyzed from the neck down. She wants to know the former Massachusetts governor's position on stem-cell research.

It wouldn't take an act of Clintonesque empathy to express sympathy for this girl. To ask how her cousin is doing. To recognize the pain her family has gone through. Any minimally adept city-council candidate would do it. Indeed, pretty much any person—even without the incentive to try to win people over for an election—would do it. It takes a prodigious emotional reserve, or a monomaniacal focus on policy, or some other unfathomable quality, *not* to do it.

But Mitt Romney doesn't. "Great question," he says. "Let me tell you where I would invest federal dollars." He then launches into a detailed explanation of stem-cell research, describing a meeting he had a few years ago with a professor at Stanford University who told him about altered nuclear transfer, or "alternative methods of getting embryonic-like cells." By the end of his brief discussion of "reprogramming" and "pluripotent cells," there is no doubt that Mitt Romney knows stem-cell policy. All that he fails to address is the human element of the question.

The next day, at another town hall in Nashua, a woman gets up and asks another stem-cell question, prefacing it by saying that her son has Type 1 diabetes and the family has lived with the effects "24/7, 365. I think every hour of every day about what the effect of this will be on his work." Again, Romney dives straight into the details of the policy.

Politics largely is about relating to people, and it is here—despite his resources, his organization, and his planning—that Mitt Romney has fallen down. It's why he hasn't been able to make the sale with voters, and why his candidacy faces the abyss after losses in Iowa and New Hampshire. Romney is an impressive and fundamentally decent man who has been diminished by his campaign.

At a time when the electorate was looking for a different kind of politician, Romney ran in Iowa as the same old kind of Republican. Shifts in his positions (the ever-maligned "flip-flops") also made him seem like the same old kind of politician. Romney had to become pro-life if he was to have a chance for the nomination; he would have been in worse shape than Rudy Giuliani if he hadn't. And he had to run in socially conservative Iowa because anything other than an early-state strategy seeking to build momentum on initial victories wouldn't have made sense for a candidate without a national following.

Politics largely is about relating to people, and it is here—despite his resources, his organization, and his planning—that Mitt Romney has fallen down.

So Romney had little choice but to pursue the strategy he pursued. But something of him got lost in the process. The most genuine moment he had in the run-up to the Iowa caucuses was his religion-in-politics speech at the George H. W. Bush library, making the case that his Mormonism shouldn't be held against him. His faith is obviously close to his heart, and he gets passionate when defending it. Otherwise, he tried to grind it out against Mike Huckabee in Iowa, running negative ads about the former Arkansas governor's record on spending, immigration, and commutations. A natural performer, Huck excited evangelical voters and trounced Romney by nine points.

In the town hall here, you can almost feel Romney's relief at being free of his long Iowa captivity. Back in a state near his home, without a huge evangelical constituency he must try to keep from voting for a Southern Baptist minister, Romney accentuates what always seemed likely to be the core appeal of his candidacy—that of the businessman and turnaround artist who comes from outside Washington and can fix the place. He has hung a gigantic 15-point "To Do" list from a tall metal frame, with the last few numbers left blank—they are to be filled in as he hears more concerns from voters on the trail. A huge sign is illuminated on the wall: "Washington Is Broken."

Romney is introduced by the founder of Staples, Tom Stemberg, who makes as persuasive a case for the candidate as you'll ever hear. He portrays Romney as a frugal ("always trying to save money for his state, for his family, and for his country") and visionary businessman who realized the potential of Staples when other investors didn't. He can apply those skills and attributes to Washington at a time when "nothing happens at all that's any good" there. "We need someone who understands the complex problems," Stemberg says, "and there's no one who doesn't think that Mitt is the smartest candidate in the field." That's hardly a populist rallying cry—being smart rarely is—but it has the ring of truth.

Romney then takes the microphone and makes his core argument: "It's finally time to have somebody go to Washington who is not a lifelong politician worrying about his career, worrying whether his party is going to get an edge, worrying whether he can settle a score with the other politicians, but rather worrying about one thing—solving the challenges and problems that face America. I'm convinced that our future is brighter than our past. That America can overcome any challenge we have,

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By John Fleming

They have been stored away for years, gathering dust in your attic or on the top shelf in your closet. You would never dream of getting rid of them, but you're not sure what else to do with your vintage vinyls and cassettes. You would love to be able to listen to them again, but pulling out the old record player (which may or may not still work) is not worth the hassle. In addition, you don't have a cassette player any longer.

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This beautifully designed, all-in-one system combines the most modern of components with a retro-style design. The cherry finish cabinet has old-fashioned speaker panels on the front. Also located on the front is an antique brass front panel that contains the LCD display and all the buttons and knobs necessary for each of the three components.

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but we're finally going to have to deal with them head on."

He pivots to his "To Do" list. People applaud as he explains each of the items on it, from ending illegal immigration to fixing Social Security. As is often the case, he has all the lines down, but he lacks the music. People begin to wander off before he is finished, leaving empty metal folding chairs toward the back—always fastened on by reporters to show that a candidate lacks support.

Later that night, at the ABC News debate, Romney has one of the worst moments of his campaign. Again and again, other candidates question his fundamental sincerity on issues, and Romney never replies with any indignation. What he wields instead is a command of policy details (always responding with substance) and an incredibly even temperament (never losing his cool). Both are important and admirable qualities, but not sufficient when people are questioning your character. A politician with better spontaneous, gut-level instincts than Romney's would have defused the situation with humor, or hit back with a calculated burst of anger.

The next day, Romney seems energized, as if his natural competitive drive has kicked in with the realization that everyone else in the race is hunting for his head. Clearly with the debate in mind, he criticizes "insult-hurling" as typical of Washington. When a woman gets up to say that she watched the debate and wants to know why it is that John McCain seems to think no one should ever change his mind, Romney has a big opening. He knocks McCain for still saying that he'd oppose the Bush tax cuts. Romney says that, in contrast, he'd "take being right over being consistent every day of the week."

The night before, immigration was a major point of contention, and Romney seemed defensive as the other candidates battered him on the issue. Now he gets in his shot cleanly: "Senator McCain, and many others like him, feel that all those who've come here illegally—once you put the criminals aside—everybody else should be able to stay here for the rest of their life. In my opinion, that's a form of amnesty. In my opinion that is wrong. That will only encourage more illegal immigration. It's time to stop illegal immigration." He gets sustained applause.

Later, at the evening's Fox News debate, he turns in a radically improved performance. He is confident and fluid, and pushes back aggressively against Huckabee and McCain. Huckabee can't take it and retreats into evasion over his record on taxes and immigration. McCain stands down, wanting not to appear too quarrelsome, as he seemed the night before. Romney's strong performance fuels a late charge against McCain in this state. Here is the fresh face with a top-notch résumé, in line with his party on the major issues of taxes and immigration, bashing Washington at a time of widespread frustration with the Beltway.

On paper Romney looked certain to appeal to mainstream Republicans, and had the potential to unite the Right in a very crowded field. But in practice he has fallen short, and the difference has been his inability to move people. Obama has lifted people up with his vision of hope; Huckabee has excited them with his David-versus-Goliath campaign; and McCain has moved them with his courageous service to country. Romney wasn't inspirational. Instead he had a "To Do" list. He had competence, but that is only one quality people look for in a president, and it's not necessarily the foremost one.

Romney now goes on to Michigan, but he might have trouble beating McCain there given his losses in Iowa and New Hampshire and the fact that McCain-friendly Democrats and independents can vote in Michigan's Republican primary. Romney's path to the nomination has begun to look more and more like Rudy Giuliani's—explain away early losses (although relatively narrow ones) and hope the field stays chaotic enough for a late comeback.

If journalists write obituaries for the Romney campaign, there will be a focus on what he did, on the "flip-flops" to the right. But what he did wasn't the problem. It was what he lacked, the human touch, the gut-level instinct of an exceptional politician, the ability to inspire. He had the answers, but not the connection, and that made all the difference. **NR**

■ **PAKISTAN**

The Real Bhutto

Against the myth-making

JONATHAN FOREMAN

In the days since Benazir Bhutto's assassination, much has been revealed, though little about the murder itself. Its culprits and even its means remain a mystery shrouded in rumor. What did become all too clear in the aftermath of the murder was the gullibility—and sometimes the dishonesty—of Benazir's many influential Western friends, in particular the journalists she cultivated so brilliantly.

The torrents of sorrowful praise for Benazir—much of it in the form of solipsistic articles with titles like "The Benazir I Knew"—testify to the Anglophone media's blinding vulnerability to a certain kind of glamour. It's a glamour that has everything to do with power, money, and proximity to great political drama, as well as Benazir's good looks and unthreatening Easternness. One pundit has called her "Ahmed Chalabi in lipstick," but Chalabi is unlikely to be the subject of gilded reminiscences by Tina Brown and a herd of influential fiftysomething graduates of Oxford and Harvard.

Furthermore, unlike the controversial Iraqi, Benazir had been a world-famous figure since her early 20s, and the record from her two terms in office can be set against her rhetoric of democracy and women's rights. And like so many children of foreign leaders and kleptocrats who go to American or British colleges for polishing, Benazir came from a class background that few of her elegant friends would have understood or sympathized with.

The giant mausoleum was the giveaway. Most of the news cameras at her funeral focused on the crowds of supporters and family retainers performing the rite of public grief. But the few shots of the Bhutto

Mr. Foreman, who recently returned from Pakistan, has reported on Pakistani affairs for the *Daily Telegraph*.

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mausoleum near Larkhana, where Benazir is now buried next to her "martyred" father, showed a multi-domed building on the scale of the Taj Mahal towering over the plains of Sindh. It's rare for foreigners to get a visual sense of what it means when Pakistanis talk about "feudal families"—the private armies and prisons, the tenants voting for the family's preferred candidate under watchful eyes. But this was it: a marble manifestation of Pakistani feudalism as it has evolved for a theoretically democratic age.

If the sight of the mausoleum wasn't enough to undermine the modern, progressive image that Benazir had constructed with the help of her Western friends, then the bizarre succession process within her Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) ought to have done the trick. Apparently the PPP's "Chairperson for Life" wrote a "political will" in October and entrusted it to her Filipina servant Seeta. This was duly read out to the family and party faithful on December 30 by Benazir's 19-year-old son, Bilawal. It anointed her semi-estranged husband, Asif Ali Zardari, as her successor (together with Makhdoom Amin Fahim, the deputy chairman of the party).

Zardari, who seemed impressively untroubled by grief, then announced that he would be a sort of regent until Bilawal was ready to inherit his mother's mantle (25 is the minimum age for electoral office in Pakistan). He also announced that all three of Benazir's children would be adding Bhutto to their surname. (Benazir had kept her maiden name for similar political reasons.)

People often refer to the PPP as Pakistan's only genuine mass political party, but it isn't really a political party in the Western democratic sense. Founded as the Sindh Peoples Party by Benazir's grandfather, Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, it has never had an internal election. It enjoys a huge and faithful mass following largely because of her father Zulfikar Bhutto's brilliant but faithless populism. A convert to democracy after serving in Gen. Ayub Khan's dictatorship, Bhutto promised massive land reform but failed to deliver in any significant sense, and he invented a doctrine of "Islamic socialism" that all but destroyed Pakistan's economy. A kind of Pakistani Perón before he flagrantly rigged the 1977 election and was deposed in a coup, Zulfikar fatally politicized the efficient and honest civil service Pakistan had inherited from the British Raj. It was also Bhutto *père* who made Red China the key arms supplier of Pakistan, sponsored the first Islamist revolutionaries in Afghanistan, bombed Baluchi separatists into submission, and initiated Pakistan's nuclear-weapons program.

Benazir worshipped her charismatic father, who was hanged in front of her by Gen. Zia ul-Haq in 1979. Like him, she switched political stances easily depending on circumstance and the requirements of power. Unlike his administrations, however, hers were marked by spectacular corruption and incompetence.

Glamour, yes—but corruption and incompetence, too

It isn't clear how much Benazir knew about the activities of her husband, whose nickname, thanks to the kickbacks he took, was "Mr. 10 Percent," and whom she appointed investment minister even though he'd recently been jailed on extortion charges. Contemporary legend had it that Benazir was in the sexual thrall of the gangsterish former playboy, and that whenever she confronted him with a dereliction he would take her to bed and the matter would be forgotten. Certainly, once in exile she showed little compunction about living off the $1.5 billion the couple allegedly looted from the Pakistani treasury. (The family still owns $1 billion in property around the world.)

If that's not bad enough, Zardari is widely believed to have been responsible for the murder of Benazir's brother Murtaza in 1996, an affair that recalls the savage dynastic struggles of the Borgias or the khanates of Central Asia. The former leader of the PPP's armed wing, Murtaza had recently returned from exile in the Levant. He was seeking to wrest control of the PPP from Benazir and Zardari when the Karachi police gunned him down. Benazir was PM at the time, and Zardari effectively ran Karachi, the nation's largest city. The ambush—which involved a roadblock, snipers in trees, and the cutting of electricity to part of the city—could hardly have taken place without the nod of Zardari and his protégés. Though Benazir would claim that Murtaza was the victim of the ISI (Pakistan's main intelligence agency) or of General Zia's loyalists, her government subsequently promoted all the police officials involved in her brother's killing.

As prime minister, Bhutto did nothing for women's rights, or even for the other aristocratic women who flocked to the PPP. She told preposterous lies, such as her claim to have installed computers in every school in Pakistan. She appointed the fiercely anti-American Islamist general Hamid Gul as chief of the ISI. (He was reportedly on the list of alleged conspirators Benazir gave Musharraf after the October 2007 bomb attack on her motorcade, and was arrested by Musharraf in November.)

It may be true, as some of her defenders argue, that during her two administrations Benazir was in no position to challenge the army's enthusiasm for the Taliban or for sponsoring terrorism in Indian Kashmir. It's harder to defend her on the issue of nuclear proliferation. The author Shyam Bhatia says that Benazir told him she had personally delivered nuclear-warhead designs to North Korea in return for missile technology. Nor is it clear that her later pro-American conversion was anything more than a means to an end, which makes it all the more ironic that so many voices have blamed America for somehow forcing her to return to her doom.

One of those voices is that of Imran Khan, the cricketer and socialite–turned–politician. After the assassination, he promptly denounced Musharraf—who had recently had him arrested—as the real author of the crime and claimed that the convoy of Pakistan's other major opposition leader, Nawaz Sharif, had also been attacked on

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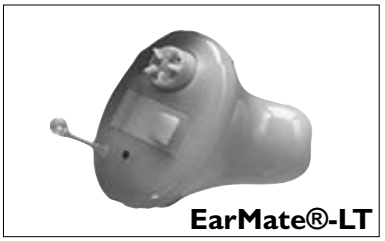
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the day of Bhutto's death. The alleged Sharif attack, as well as an alleged assault on the hospital where Benazir was taken after the bomb, was frequently cited in news reports over the next few days. Sharif himself has never mentioned any such attempt, though he was quick to denounce Musharraf for Benazir's killing. The multiple-assassination scenario now seems to have vanished to the farthest reaches of the Internet.

Almost everyone in Pakistan who said anything about the attack said something ridiculous, whether it was the PPP official who revealed that Benazir's last words were "Long live Bhutto" or the interior ministry's farcical assertions about death by a Landcruiser sun-roof lever. The latter theory, along with dubious claims about specific al-Qaeda and Taliban plots, illustrates the stupidity and habitual disingenuousness of some of Musharraf's officials, and has served only to damage his government. These assertions do not, however, render the more paranoid claims of PPP officials (or Nawaz Sharif) any more credible. The whole incident is made even murkier by Zardari's mysterious refusal to allow an autopsy before Bhutto was buried. (While autopsies are seen as disrespectful in more conservative corners of Pakistani society, in this case it surely would have been appropriate.) One PPP official has even claimed that Benazir was killed using some kind of high-tech laser device—implying again an ISI hit squad, perhaps using U.S. technology.

Just as silly is the observation made by many foreign commentators that, because the assassination took place in Rawalpindi, where the Pakistani military has its headquarters, the murderers must have had some kind of official links. Otherwise, how could they have eluded military security? But 'Pindi is a big, unruly city of 3 million people, not a small garrison town, and has long been a place of violent ferment. (The park where Benazir was killed was the site of PM Liaquat Ali Khan's assassination in 1951.) The police, not the army, maintain security in Rawalpindi, and the 'Pindi police are a byword throughout South Asia for incompetence and corruption. Musharraf himself has been subject to three major assassination attempts in 'Pindi, and even the ISI was attacked there this fall, with two suicide bombings against buses filled with its officers.

Many commentators who dismissed the idea of democracy in Iraq have been peculiarly pious about it in Pakistan, claiming that it is the only cure for the country's ills. There is certainly a democratic deficit in Pakistan, but it is perhaps less important than the country's governance deficit—the failure of the state to function with minimal efficiency, honesty, and compassion. The same problem exists around the region. It's worse in Nepal, not quite so bad in India, but similar everywhere: government schools that exist only on paper; clinics bereft of medicine because government doctors sell it at the bazaar; rural clinics where the doctor never turns up; police whose primary job is extorting bribes and who do the will of the wealthy; corruption that endlessly erodes the trust between individuals and the state.

For all his faults, Musharraf has been far better than any of his predecessors, civilian or military, when it comes to taking seriously the duties of government. If you go to remote areas of Pakistan, people will tell you about his audit of 1999, when he sent officers to see if schools and clinics on the government books really existed. It was often the first time an official from Pakistan's central government had *ever* visited these villages.

That said, some of the retired officers Musharraf appointed to various ministries turned out to be just as crooked or incompetent as ordinary civilian bureaucrats. Moreover, nothing excuses Musharraf's ill-judged and destructive attacks on what passes for civil society, or the shameful brutality of his battle with a group of dissident lawyers. Yet his many flaws do not nullify his achievements or mean that any alternative must be superior.

Could elements of the ISI have been involved in Benazir's murder? Of course. But the long list of plausible suspects includes al-Qaeda, some local branch of the Taliban, various Bhutto relatives, and some of the Sunni militant groups that considered her a Shiite heretic because her mother is Iranian.

Whatever the truth of the assassination, and despite Benazir's many faults, the fact remains that her death is a disaster for both Pakistan and the United States. Certainly it leaves a far narrower choice between relative evils in a country that requires wise and skillful leadership if it is to survive as a functioning state. **NR**

■ THE NATION

An Ugly Heritage

The poor man's national park; the citizen's burden

JOHN J. MILLER

A few years ago, Lee Ott was driving around his vegetable farm in Yuma, Ariz., when he spotted a crew of surveyors putting stakes in his land. "I stopped and asked them what was going on," he recalls. It turned out they were marking the boundaries of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. Ott's farm fell entirely within its 22 square miles, and nobody had bothered to tell him. "I became worried because I wanted to build a new house and a shop on the farm," he says. "I didn't need anybody to give me a bunch of rules about how they should look or whether I could even build them."

So he decided to fight back. He met with the Yuma County Farm Bureau, which then contacted all of the landowners within the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area. "About 600 people came to our meeting," says Harold Maxwell, a farm-equipment distributor. "When I asked for a show of hands from those who knew they were in the NHA, only one hand went up."

National Heritage Areas are like a poor man's National Park—they aren't actually owned by the federal government, but they're zoned by it. Instead of employing Park Rangers in stiff-brimmed hats, they're often administered by liberal groups that want to weaken the property rights of the people who hold a piece of land within or even near NHA boundaries. This is generally done in the name of historic preservation and environmental conservation. The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, for instance, includes an old territorial prison and some wetlands along the Colorado River. Yet NHAs are perhaps best regarded as a clever combination of pork-barrel spend-

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ing and land-use regulations—and they're an increasingly popular tool for slow-growth activists who bristle at the thought of economic development that they don't personally control.

Since the first NHA was created in 1984 to preserve a 61-mile canal that runs between Lake Michigan and the Illinois River, more than three dozen have come into existence. Today, they're a growth industry: Ten were added in 2006 alone, and last fall, the House of Representatives passed a $135 million bill that would set up six more. Some, such as the one in Yuma, are just dots on the map. Others are sprawling. The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area takes up the entire state.

"These are basically federal zoning laws," says Peyton Knight of the National Center for Public Policy Research, a free-market think tank that has tried to draw attention to the problem. The rules governing NHAs vary from place to place, but they tend to have a few features in common. One important element is the involvement of a "management entity" that works in conjunction with the Park Service to come up with a plan—in the case of one NHA, this means creating an "inventory" of properties of "national historic significance" that it wants "preserved," "managed," or "acquired."

A section of the proposed Journey Through Hallowed Ground

KEN GARRETT

Sometimes the ambitions of an NHA amount merely to a bit of parkland pump-priming. The website of the Rivers of Steel NHA near Pittsburgh boasts that it "is spearheading a drive" to have the National Park Service absorb an old steel mill and mentions a bill in Congress. So it's a federally funded organization that lobbies Washington for ever more subsidies.

But does the National Park Service really need more parks? It already operates almost 400 sites. Although some remain incredibly popular, visits within the system have declined in the last decade—a trend that started before the terrorist attacks of 9/11 resulted in fewer foreign visitors. What's more, the Department of the Interior is having trouble maintaining the properties it already runs. Its maintenance backlog is a multibillion-dollar wish list of unfunded repairs and improvements. The National Parks Conservation Association, a non-profit group, says that the parks need an extra $800 million per year just to fund their existing operations adequately. This certainly isn't the result of a Scrooge-like Bush administration: The Park Service is spending more money per visitor, per acre, and per employee than ever before.

Supporters of NHAs insist that they aren't in the business of buying or regulating property, which is true in the sense that NHAs do neither of these things directly. But they work to achieve these results indirectly, by encouraging local governments to implement restrictive land-use plans. "That's how they achieve their goals—by pushing counties and towns to do what they can't do for themselves," says Cheryl Chumley, a Virginia writer who has tracked NHAs.

They do this by dangling the prospect of federal largesse in front of potential recipients. West Virginia's Wheeling NHA, which is basically a downtown preservation project, makes this explicit, according to a Heritage Foundation report by Chumley and Ron Ott. Its management plan calls for new zoning ordinances and the acquisition of private property. And how will it achieve these goals? As Chumley and Ott write, "Major funding to support the activities . . . and the recommendations of this plan will be coming from the National Park Service." In the year prior to its most recent available tax filing, the Wheeling NHA received more than $2.5 million in government contributions—and not a dime from private sources.

One of the most controversial NHAs is the proposed Journey Through Hallowed Ground, which would encompass a corridor roughly 175 miles in length between Charlottesville, Va., and Gettysburg, Pa. The exact boundaries aren't determined because this NHA at least technically remains on the drawing board. But that didn't stop Congress in 2005 from giving a $1 million earmark to the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, a non-profit group that's pushing for the NHA. The organization's board is full of slow-growthers, including Peter Brink, the senior vice president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "If this NHA becomes a reality, it would essentially deputize the National Trust and its allies to oversee land-use policy in the whole region," says Knight.

Once upon a time, historic-preservation groups operated public-education programs and tried to save old homes and hotels, often by purchasing them. Nowadays, however, they're much more interested in regulating land that they don't own. In Oregon and Washington state, where property-rights advocates have put forth ballot initiatives to compensate landowners when government regulations lower the value of their property, the National Trust has campaigned to defeat them. It even worked to derail a transportation project in Virginia because a proposed road expansion would have increased traffic near the Chancellorsville battlefield—not in it, just near it. Three years ago, Emily Wadhams of the National Trust testified to Congress that "private-property rights have never been allowed to take precedence over our shared national values and the preservation of our country's heritage."

Last October, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership issued a report on how it would pursue its objec-

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Black Market Baldness Cure?

If you'd love to start growing your own hair back — thick, luxurious and healthy — then this will be the most life-changing message you'll ever read.

My name is Mike Gregory. I'm 59 years old and I used to be as bald as the palm of your hand. But now my own hair is growing back like wild jungle vegetation. You can do the same. Here's what I discovered…

European scientists were doing research on skin cancer using white mice. Each morning their skin was cleansed with a special detergent. After several weeks — the scientists noticed something amazing.

The mice seemed to be growing more fur. And not just short, little mouse fur either. Super fur! This stuff was thick and long. Like a mink pelt. Could it have been the detergent?

Scientifically Proven

The scientists did a controlled, double-blind study on several hundred bald men. Each morning half the group got a small dab of this detergent rubbed into their bald scalps. The other half got a small dab of a placebo. In six weeks, new hair began to sprout on the first group's bald heads. After a year — 90% of these subjects were growing their own hair back!

I know what you're thinking… "So why can't I just buy this stuff at the drugstore?"

That's where the black market angle comes in. The FDA has approved this magic substance as a food additive and a surfactant only — not a baldness treatment. You'd be arrested and jailed if you tried to market it as a baldness remedy. You know how brutal these guys can be.

But there's no law against telling people what this stuff is and where to get it yourself.

So I wrote a little book called, "**Black Market Baldness Cure?**" It gives you the whole story. How it works, why it works and where you can get your hands on as much as you need — real cheap too. Incredibly, a ten year supply will run you less than twenty bucks!

Safe As Mother's Milk

But is it safe? It's a food additive for god's sake. If you eat ice cream, salad dressing or mayo — you've unknowingly consumed the same stuff that can grow hair on a completely bald head! So yeah — it's quite harmless.

And it works better than those other baldness treatments that can have dangerous side effects. And a heck of a lot cheaper. You'll easily spend $100.00 or more per month on most of those other "remedies".

But here's the kicker — It doesn't work on everyone. Why? I don't know. But ten percent of guys just don't respond to this treatment.

With my guarantee — it doesn't matter. Go ahead — skip ahead and read the guarantee. I'll wait…

No B.S.

OK — so you see I'm not fooling around here. This is serious business and I won't waste your time or money or ask you to do something dangerous.

Here's a short list of other guys who have used my secret to successfully grow back their hair…

The conductor of a symphony orchestra, 8 homicide detectives, an assistant chief of police, 15 dermatologists, 2 dentists, a district attorney, the head of a county health department, an NFL scout and numerous newspaper, television and radio personalities and many Hollywood celebrities. And there's thousands more. You get the idea.

There's even a United States Patent for this material. I've included a copy in the book.

So here's what this little volume will do for you...

- You will grow your own hair back — starting in about 6 weeks
- Your results are absolutely guaranteed — I take all risk
- No hormones are involved
- No surgery is involved
- No hair weaves
- No toupees
- No wigs
- No sexual side effects
- You will look like a young man again!
- Works equally well for women who have thinning hair

FREE BONUS — "How To Feel Like A Teenager Again: Ultimate Anti-Aging Secrets Hollywood Elites Paid $20,000.00 To Discover!"

During my comprehensive research on baldness I discovered the latest research results from teams of scientists, physicians and anti-aging specialists who have recently slowed down the aging process.

Specifically — they discovered five nutrients that when taken every day-actually changes your appearance, health and vitality.

Just pop a few special pills and many signs of aging can be halted and reversed. You'll start to look and feel 20 years younger in only 30 days — guaranteed!

You just need to know what these incredible little pills are and where to get them. I spill all the beans and reveal all the secrets of where and how to get these little "magic youth bullets" — without spending an arm and a leg.

I could name drop and tell you about the superstar actor/director in his 70's who's winning Oscars and swears by these nutrients. Or the international diva or the US Senator. But I'm sworn to secrecy. And they paid up to 20 grand a year for these secrets. But not you...

This special FREE bonus report is yours to keep for free — even if you return the "**Black Market**" book for a complete refund as stated in my guarantee.

Here's why you can feel confident you aren't risking a single penny…

Lifetime "I Pay For Everything" Guarantee

PART 1: Use the secret in "**Black Market Baldness Cure?**" for as long as you want. Order the secret ingredient from the list of supply houses I've provided and give it a good test. If you don't agree that you are growing your own hair back, just send the book back anytime. Take a year, five years, ten years. Send it back anytime in your *lifetime* and I'll cheerfully refund every penny of your purchase price! But you get to keep the bonus report, *"How To Feel Like A Teenager Again: Ultimate Anti-Aging Secrets Hollywood Elites Paid $20,000.00 To Discover"*.

PART 2: But here's the really good part of my guarantee: If you do ever send the book back, send me a copy of your receipt for your purchase of the magic hair growth material from the supply house and I'll refund every cent you paid for that too — up to $20.00! You risk absolutely nothing. Fair enough?

Here's how to order…

Risk-Free Trial Offer

☑ OK Mike — I'm going to take advantage of your risk-free trial offer to grow my own hair back and learn how to feel like a teenager again and start to look and feel 20 years younger and stop father time in his tracks. I understand that if I'm not satisfied for any reason, I can send the book back anytime in my *lifetime* and get a complete refund of every penny I paid. But I get to keep the FREE bonus report and you'll also refund every penny I paid for the secret hair growth ingredient (up to $20.00) if I send you a copy of the receipt from the supply house. On that basis here's my $39.95 plus $4.95 S&H for a total of **$44.90**.

Please make your check or moneyorder out to **U.S. Health** and mail it to: **US Health, Dept. NR-1, 1153 Malabar Rd. NE #8267, Palm Bay, FL 32907**. You may also send your Visa, Mastercard or American Express number with expiration date. Your book and bonus report will be rushed to your door by first class mail in a discreet brown padded envelope. Thanks — Mike.

P.S. Write the code words "**Dr. Blue**" anywhere on your order and I'll send you a special 2nd FREE bonus report that will stun your sex life into action without even thinking about it. If this big "little" secret doesn't work for you — you're dead! Guys tell me this report is worth more than the other two books combined. And you can keep it even if you send the "**Black Market**" book back if you order today.

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tives in an NHA: "Farmland, in particular, is a threatened resource. . . . There are many opportunities to further protect these resources through conservation easements, Rural Historic District designations, Agricultural and Forestal districts, and private and public easement and land acquisition." Except for easements, in which landowners sell certain rights to their land, each of these suggestions would amount to having government agencies tell property holders what they can do—or, more likely, what they can't do. In September, more than 110 groups, including the American Conservative Union, the Family Research Council, and FreedomWorks, signed a letter urging Congress to reject new NHAs.

Backers of Journey Through Hallowed Ground, including Republican congressman Frank Wolf of Virginia, cite a poll to claim that the public is behind them. What they don't reveal is something that the *Fauquier Times-Democrat*, a local newspaper, uncovered: The poll was sponsored by a group that endorses the NHA, and 96 percent of the people in the survey didn't even know what the NHA is.

That's what happened in Yuma, Ariz.: Congress created the Yuma Crossing NHA, and hardly any of the locals knew about it until Lee Ott saw the surveyors on his property. The good news is that Yuma's farmers fought back—they asked members of Arizona's congressional delegation to intervene, and eventually the NHA was downsized dramatically. Today, it covers only four square miles. Threats loom elsewhere, however, and an exhibit on the Yuma County Farm Bureau's experience will be featured at this year's American Farm Federation Bureau convention.

Although Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, is run by a private group rather than the federal government, supporters of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground like to mention that the boundaries of their NHA would include it. They would do well to read Jefferson's words, and in particular a line that their foes enjoy quoting: "The true foundation of republican government is the equal right of every citizen in his person and property and in their management." **NR**

■ APPRECIATION

No Flash in The Pan

Remembering George MacDonald Fraser

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

Ten years ago I saw Lady Thatcher "frit" (a Lincolnshire slang term meaning "frightened" that she once flung across parliament at the Labour party). She was seated next to me at a National Review Institute dinner on the topic of "The Hero Today" or some such. And she was intimidated by the speaker immediately preceding her.

He was George MacDonald Fraser, novelist, memoirist, journalist, soldier, and, above all, creator of the great Victorian anti-hero, Brig. Gen. Sir Harry Paget Flashman, VC, KCB, KCIE; Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur; U.S. Medal of Honor; and San Serafino Order of Purity and Truth, 4th Class.

MacDonald had been invited because I and other NRI organizers were fans of the Flashman novels and wanted to meet their author. Our cover story was that the inventor of the greatest anti-hero in literature must have something interesting to say about the modern status of the hero. And we were bang right.

Fraser, who in conversation was a mild and charming man with a nice line in understated humor, was a dynamo on the platform. He began lightly, with a few self-deprecatory jokes, but he was soon developing a powerful critique of the victim as hero in a Britain that had changed from a nation of stoics to one of Dianafied sentimentalists. Beautifully written and illustrated with exactly the right topical examples, Fraser's speech held the audience as if in a trance.

Lady Thatcher turned to me, chairman for the evening, and said: "I can't possibly follow this. Anything after Mr. Fraser can only be an anti-climax."

Well, I knew she had a good speech ready. Also, Lady Thatcher could get a standing ovation from a conservative audience for reading the telephone book. So I reassured her. Besides, I had been paying close attention to Fraser and I thought I could see where he was going to end up.

"Anyway it's out of our hands," I said. "I think Mr. Fraser is going to introduce you himself." Sure enough, he turned towards her and said: "But it is some consolation that even in this unheroic age . . . when so much of my nation's worthy past is devalued—in such a time it is comforting to remember that not so long ago there was someone who was in no doubt what it meant to be British, and stood firm when it mattered, at the time of the Falklands. It can't have been easy; there were faint hearts and dissenting voices. . . . Anyway, she stood firm, as precious few men would have done; she did not go wobbly. And for that, on behalf of a damfool generation, and in the language of the XIVth Army, I'd like to say, 'Shabash, memsahib.' Which, being translated, means, 'Bravo, lady.'"

Right on cue, Lady Thatcher got up, walked to the lectern, and shook Fraser's hand, to thunderous applause all round. You can't plan these moments—they just happen. But when they do, they sweep along everything in their path. So Lady Thatcher's speech went well, despite her fears.

Still, when she had finished, she and Sir Denis joined the others clustering around Fraser. Maybe the two old soldiers exchanged a signal of some kind. For after a short interval Fraser and Denis disappeared into the bar until the small hours.

Fraser, who died in early January, would have denied hotly that he himself was any kind of hero. His concept of heroism was exceptional and active courage in the face of death or something worse. He had served as a young private in the Border Regiment in the Burma campaign—part of Field Marshal Slim's "Forgotten Army" that beat the Japanese man for man in the toughest of jungle fighting. His experiences are recounted in his superb campaign memoir, *Quartered Safe Out Here*—which soldiers tell me is one of the best accounts ever written of war from the ordinary soldier's point of view. It is also a wonderful picture of male comradeship under fire.

After the war, Fraser was commissioned as a junior officer in the Gordon Highlanders in a British Army getting accustomed to "keeping places orderly" in

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Jerusalem (II)

Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous clarifying message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Muslim/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that such claim had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem continues to be of great importance. The Arabs clamorously insist that at least the eastern part of the city should be yielded to them. The Israelis insist that Jerusalem continue as the indivisible capital of their country.

What are the facts?

Jerusalem – reunited and indivisible. Ever since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, all American governments and Congress have confirmed their conviction that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that, once reunited, it should remain indivisible.

Before the Six-Day War in 1967 the city was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part since the War of Liberation in 1948. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out and all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed. The various Christian denominations operated under the strict control of Muslim authorities.

All this ended in 1967 with the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces and with the reunification of the city. Access to all holy places became available to all. The many religious bodies in the holy city (and in all of Israel) are able to pursue their activities without any restrictions. Jerusalem is today truly a free and open city. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements dividing the city were finally torn down.

U.S. Embassy not in Israel's capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem and wish it to become the capital of a hoped-for Palestinian state, nobody, not even the Arabs, questions the western part of the city to be Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that, despite this universal recognition, the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, the major commercial city, instead of in Jerusalem, Israel's capital and the seat of the Knesset (parliament), the Supreme Court, and of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York, rather than in Washington D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv. It is a bizarre situation: All ambassadors and their staffs must make almost daily trips to Jerusalem, because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. The United States maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in the nation's designated capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

> "The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state."

Congress in favor of moving embassy to Jerusalem. Despite the fact that, prior to their elections, both Presidents Bush and President Clinton assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called "final status" talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress – both Republican and Democratic – have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem within the next three or four years. And that was about ten years ago. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. The U.S. has a lease on a 10-acre embassy lot in Talpiot, a totally Jewish neighborhood in West Jerusalem. It is to be hoped therefore that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy in Israel will indeed be located in Jerusalem – the capital of one of our country's closest allies. Three of the current Republican candidates to the presidency have promised that, if elected, they would move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.

The main reason given for not moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem is that it would violate "Arab sensitivities." That might indeed be the case. But while there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would certainly not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Abdullah of Jordan would not jeopardize the political and financial lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Saudi Arabia would make some perfunctory noises, but that would be just about all. The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal once and for all that there will be no U.S. or world support for the division of Jerusalem and for the establishment – in any part of it – as the capital of a new Arab state.

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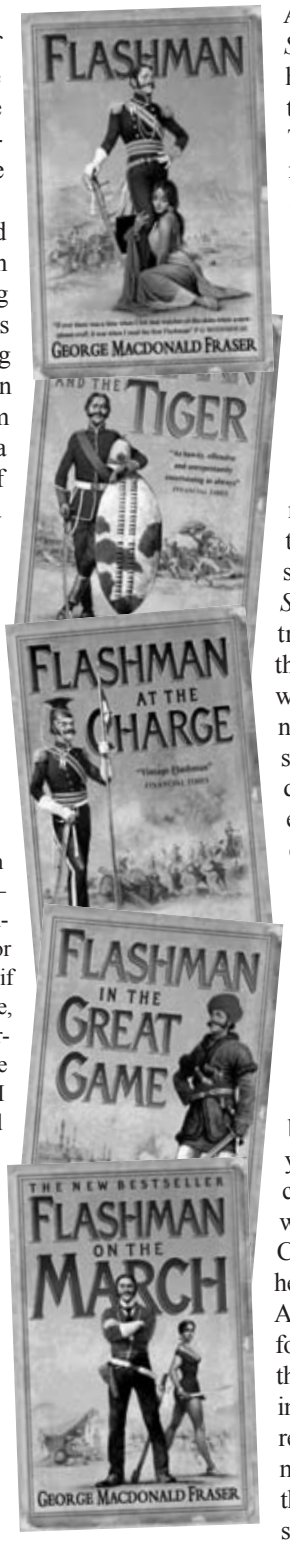
North Africa and the Middle East. These experiences are recounted in the three volumes of his short stories about Private McAuslan—"the dirtiest soldier in the world." Most of these stories are hilarious; one or two are poignant; all give a persuasive picture of semi-peacetime soldiering in the dying days of colonialism.

Fraser depicts himself (and his fictional alter ego, Dand, in the McAuslan stories) as doing nothing out of the ordinary as a soldier, certainly nothing heroic. But make up your own mind. Here is an account, from *The Sheik and the Dustbin*, of a junior officer at the head of young conscripts facing a Middle Eastern mob:

> If you say the word, they'll shoot that advancing mob flat, and go on shooting, because that's what they're trained to do, for thirty bob a week—and if that doesn't stop the opposition, they'll stand and fight it out on the spot as long as they can, because that's part of the conscript's bargain too. But it's entirely up to you—and there's no colonel or company commander to instruct or advise. And it doesn't matter if you've led a section in warfare, where there is no rule save survival; this is different, for these are not the enemy—my God, I thought, you could have fooled me; I may know it, but I bet they don't—they are civilians, and you must not shoot unless you have to, and only you can decide that, so make up your mind, Dand, and don't dawdle; you're getting nine quid a week after all, so the least you can do is show a little initiative.

That has the ring of personal experience. And whether or not it counts as heroism, it's certainly not commuting.

Fraser went from the Army into journalism, screenwriting, history, and eventually writing of all kinds. His screenplays include *Octopussy*, several versions of *The Three Musketeers*, and—ever the professional—the Brigitte Nielsen vehicle *Red Sonja*. He wrote a fine history of the Anglo-Scottish borders—*The Steel Bonnets*—and a study of how accurately Hollywood treated history. (He gave Tinseltown a good grade.) His memoirs are magnificently angry at the decay of Britain under New Labour. And his non-Flashman novels, in addition to being rattling good tales, are brilliantly effective at recreating the atmospheres of other times and other places.



It is for Flashman, however, that Fraser will mainly be remembered. Flashman was the villain in the 1857 boys'-school novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays*; Fraser decided to trace the scoundrel's career through the Victorian age in what eventually became twelve novels. The conceit of the series—a conceit that actually deceived some early reviewers—is that these are not novels at all but the rediscovered "papers" of a Victorian military hero.

Flashman is an excellent narrator because, despite being a bully, liar, coward, and lecher, he has one great virtue: He is honest with you, the reader. You trust Flashman because everything he tells you about himself is to his discredit. Take the act of valor for which he received the Victoria Cross. Flashman describes how he was trying to surrender to the Afghans when he ran from the fort with the flag (having spent the siege cowering and drinking in a cellar). But the British relief force arrived at that exact moment—and assumed that the brave fellow was trying to save the regimental standard. With them, of course, Flashy plays the bluff, modest hero to perfection.

In the course of his long and dishonorable career, Flashman meets almost every famous person in the Victorian world—including Disraeli, Wellington, Bismarck, and Lincoln. He beds a very high proportion of the women he meets—and they include Lola Montez and Queen Ranavalona of Madagascar. He gets into terrible scrapes through lechery and greed but gets out of them again by quick-wittedness, charm, low cunning, and running like hell, if necessary throwing his most recent mistress off the sleigh to delay the approaching wolves.

That's the only problem with Flashy: When a chap gets out of so many dastardly holes, it's hard to believe that he is quite as cowardly as he would have you believe. There must be something more to him.

And in fact Fraser had pulled off a wonderful trick. The kind of blood-and-guts historical fiction he loved on the screen or between hard covers had become hopelessly unfashionable by the mid-Sixties, when he began writing. So he revived and refreshed this old-fashioned genre by making his hero a villain and granting him the gift of a witty, shrewd, and sardonic tongue with which to tell of his wicked adventures. And Flashy was soon recognized by good judges as the real thing. P. G. Wodehouse spoke for millions of readers when he said, "If there was a time when I felt that watcher-of-the-skies-when-a-new-planet stuff, it was when I read the first Flashman."

George MacDonald Fraser created the greatest anti-hero in literature—I repeat: name me a better—because he admired heroism and loved tales of heroic adventure. With his death we addicts will never know exactly what lies behind this item in Flashy's *Who's Who* entry: "U.S. Army (major, Union forces, 1862; colonel (staff) Army of the Confederacy, 1863)," or exactly what he achieved as ADC to the Emperor Maximilian of Mexico. Along with Jeeves and Bertie, and Falstaff, and Rupert of Hentzau, and all the other immortals of adventure and comedy, Flashy will always be ready to entertain us with his unmistakable tones in return for our simply taking a book down from the shelf.

Which makes me wonder: Might not the deceitful Flashy have used exactly the same words as the upright George MacDonald Fraser in introducing Lady Thatcher that night ten years ago? **NR**

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A Half Century's Slander

It isn't conservatives who must answer for fascism

JONAH GOLDBERG

If you search Lexis-Nexis for articles from just the last two years in which "Bush" and "fascist" are used in the same sentence, the results exceed 2,000. Search for the years encompassing his entire term, and smoke will start to come out of your computer.

A stack of recent books have branded Bush, Cheney, Republicans, conservatives, the Christian Right, and, of course, "neocons" as fascists, Nazis, or sympathizers with fascism and Nazism. Feminist author (and former Gore consultant) Naomi Wolf argues that America has already gone Nazi, equating the United States of today with the Germany of the early 1930s. The dyspeptic left-wing journalist Joe Conason warns that America is on the verge of fascism in *It* Can *Happen Here*. The Pulitzer Prize–winning former *New York Times* reporter Chris Hedges's book on the Christian Right gets straight to the point, beginning with its title: "American Fascists."

Today's F-bombers will tell you that conservatives have brought such charges on themselves by supporting George W. Bush and "his" War on Terror. What passes for the Left's argument is by now so familiar that we need not dwell on it for long. Nazis cracked down on civil liberties; America is cracking down on civil liberties. Nazis used terror and, allegedly, so does the Bush administration. Nazis invaded countries; America invaded countries. Hitler lied; Bush lied. Nazis rounded up Jews after labeling them enemies of the state; Bush is rounding up Muslims and labeling them enemies of the state. Hitler was a bad guy; Bush is a bad guy. Auschwitz, Guantanamo: What's in a name?

But this is nothing new. In 2000, when Bush was still promising a "humble" foreign policy, Jerrold Nadler denounced Republican efforts in the Florida recount as having "the whiff of fascism." Jesse Jackson lamented that, in the hanging-chad controversy, Holocaust survivors were being victimized "again." Earlier that year, Bill Clinton denounced the Texas GOP platform as a "fascist tract."

During the fight over the Contract with America, Rep. Charlie Rangel complained that "Hitler wasn't even talking about doing these things." (This *is* technically accurate in that Hitler wasn't pushing term limits for committee chairmen and "zero based" budgeting.) When Newt Gingrich invited black congressmen to Capitol Hill social events, Rep. Major Owens responded by declaring, "These are people who are practicing genocide with a smile. They're worse than Hitler. . . . We're going to have cocktail-party genocide."

Ronald Reagan was of course called a fascist by Communists from his earliest days fighting Reds in Hollywood. Before that, "everyone knew" that Barry Goldwater was a Nazi or Nazi sympathizer.

Two generations of Hollywood scriptwriters, actors, and producers have been warning that the fascist peril lurks beneath the surface of the Right. *Pleasantville*, *Falling Down*, *Fight Club*, *American Beauty*, *American History X*, and countless other films advanced this idea. In the film adaptation of Tom Clancy's novel *The Sum of All Fears*, the all-too-real threat of Islamist terror is switched to a cabal of rich, white, conservative businessmen who just happen to be—you guessed it—Nazis. Even after 9/11, it seems liberals think the fascist Right is America's real, and only, existential threat.

* * *

This received wisdom is understandably vexing for conservatives, who have never had a kind word for fascists or Nazis. I've gotten used to it. When speaking on college campuses, I've been called a Nazi many times. The kids, accustomed to bullying their opponents with charges of intolerance that would be better aimed at themselves, rarely expect a response.

"So, tell me," I usually ask my accuser, "except for the bigotry,

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murder, and genocide, what *exactly* is it about Nazism you don't like?"

Taking advantage of the ensuing pierced-tongue-tied silence, I explain: The Nazis were *socialists*. The Nazi ideologist Gregor Strasser put it succinctly: "We are enemies, deadly enemies, of today's capitalist economic system with its exploitation of the economically weak, its unfair wage system, its immoral way of judging the worth of human beings in terms of their wealth and their money." The speech that first attracted a young Adolf Hitler to fascism was titled "How and by What Means Is Capitalism to Be Eliminated?" The Nazi-party platform demanded guaranteed jobs, the "abolition of incomes unearned by work," the nationalization of all large corporations and trusts, profit-sharing in all major industries, expanded old-age insurance, a government takeover of big department stores (think Wal-Mart), the prohibition of child labor, and countless other "progressive" reforms.

A sworn enemy of capitalism

Then I explain that the Nazis—all in the name of "progress"—sought to purge the authority of Church and tradition from society, and to replace them with the supremacy of the state and the dictates of political correctness. The Nazis partly grew out of and co-opted the first "green," youth, and health movements in the West. The proto-Nazi philosopher (and rabid anti-Semite) Ludwig Klages wrote one of the founding texts of modern environmentalism, *Man and Earth*, which presages most of the contemporary complaints from Al Gore and others on the environmental left. In 1980, the German Greens reissued his manifesto to celebrate the founding of their party.

The Nazi war on smoking would make Michael Bloomberg's heart leap. Nazis led the world in researching organic foods and alternative medicines (the concentration camp Dachau boasted the largest alternative- and organic-medicine research lab in the world). According to the medical historian Robert Proctor, the National Socialist "campaign against tobacco and the 'whole-grain bread operation' are, in some sense, as fascist as the yellow stars and the death camps."

Nazism rejected open scientific inquiry in favor of research dictated by "holistic" imperatives, and was tainted with a mysticism that exalted the "natural order" above reason (such postmodern buzzwords as "logocentrism" and "deconstructionism" originate in the Nazi canon). Heinrich Himmler was an animal-rights activist and proponent of "natural healing." Hitler and his advisers endlessly discussed the need to move the entire nation to vegetarianism as a response to the unhealthiness promoted by capitalism.

And then there were the Italian Fascists. Benito Mussolini was raised on the mother's milk of revolutionary socialism. His father, an ardent socialist who was a member of the First International along with Marx and Engels, read *Das Kapital* to young Benito as a bedtime story. He first earned the title "Il Duce" as leader of Italy's Socialist party.

Mussolini's Fascism was dubbed "right-wing" by orthodox Communists as a way to discredit dissent from the Bolshevik party line. But Mussolini and the Italian Fascists remained committed to socialism. When he was kicked out of the Socialist party solely for supporting World War I—to "save socialism," in his words—he responded, "Whatever happens, you won't lose me. Twelve years of my life in the party ought to be sufficient guarantee of my socialist faith. Socialism is in my blood."

When you point to these and myriad other facts which support the conclusion that National Socialism, as well as Italian Fascism, was a phenomenon of the Left, liberals fall back on a very different argument. So maybe the National Socialists were socialists after all, they say. But that's incidental to the "true nature" of Nazism and fascism. They only posed as socialists cynically, to attract more followers. In reality, Nazism and fascism are about war, racism, and mass murder.

Let's put aside for a moment the fact that this position is flatly untrue, and ask what it entails about conservatives. If all the manifestly leftist attributes of fascism are irrelevant but it's still fair to call conservatives Nazis and fascists, then conservatives must be Nazi-like because we too are murderous bigots. This is isn't an argument. It's slander. And it's high time we set the record straight.

* * *

On a warm July day in 1932, H. G. Wells visited Oxford University's summer school to deliver a major address to the Young Liberals, a group of progressive activists. Wells is remembered today primarily as a science-fiction writer, but this hardly does justice to the man. He was arguably the most influential English-speaking public intellectual during the first half of the 20th century. His writings were foundational to the linked progressive and social-gospel movements. He was a prominent member of the Fabian Society. His articles on religion and politics were read from the pulpit with electric excitement by American pastors. He was a frequent guest of Franklin Roosevelt in the Oval Office, and his meetings with the president were front-page news.

On that summer day at Oxford, Wells sought to summarize the unifying political idea of his life's work. That idea expressed itself in different forms over the years. He championed a "world brain" that would unify mankind under the auspices of a collective intelligence overseen by special men—variously identified as scientists, priests, warriors, even airmen and "samurai." But always they would lead and rule from above, making the hard decisions about everything from war and peace to eugenics and economics. The "will and the ideas of public-minded, masterful people" working through "a militant organization" were necessary to forge a "modernized state" that would "release the human community from the entanglements of the past." This idea, this urge, defined Wells's political vision. "I have never been able to escape altogether from its relentless logic," he declared. But until that day at Oxford he lacked a name for it. The name he came up with?

"Liberal fascism."

Wells's term was provocative, but not nearly as controversial as

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you might think. For it wasn't until the early 1930s that men of the Left were increasingly required to dissociate themselves from fascism (W. E. B. Du Bois lasted longer than most, praising Nazism as late as 1937). The Kremlin had declared at the Sixth Congress of the Third International that fascism was the last gasp of capitalism long prophesied by Marxist theology. While many useful idiots believed this, Stalin's intent was more strategic than ideological. National Socialism was proving to be a seductive alternative to his failing brand of *international* socialism. The workers of the world, it seemed, did not want to unite—but the workers of Germany, Italy, and other nations did. So Stalin issued his theory of "social fascism," which declared any socialist movement or organization that dissented from international socialism to be "objectively fascist." (Trotsky was anathematized as the leader of a "fascist coup.")

But before this hoax worked its way through the Western mind, fascism was still "progressive." Indeed, at the climax of the Progressive era, the Western world was in the throes of what I call a "fascist moment."

If the hallmark of classic fascism is the blending of war and politics, then the progressives were as fascistic as any devotee of Mussolini. They used the war in Europe as an excuse to launch a sweeping social "experiment" that we are still paying for today. John Dewey, the most important American philosopher of the 20th century, supported the war because of the "social benefits" it would provide at home. *The New Republic* editorialized that the war "should bring with it a political and economic organization better able to redeem its obligations at home." Another progressive put it more succinctly: "Laissez-faire is dead. Long live social control."

'Socialism is in my blood,' said Mussolini.

Under Woodrow Wilson, the first American president to embrace the new cult of pragmatism and power that had overtaken "enlightened" thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic (and the first American president to openly disdain the U.S. Constitution), the progressives unleashed a crackdown on freedom that makes the supposed fascism of the McCarthy era and the Bush years seem like a teach-in at Smith College. Wilson established the American Protective League, a group of domestic *fascisti* charged with crushing dissent, beating "slackers," and intimidating average Americans. Wilson's Committee for Public Information was the first modern propaganda ministry. Indeed, according to the late sociologist and intellectual historian Robert Nisbet, the "West's first real experience with totalitarianism—political absolutism extended into every possible area of culture and society, education, religion, industry, the arts, local community and family included, with a kind of terror always waiting in the wings—came with the American war state under Wilson."

Exhilarated by their power during the war, progressives were crestfallen when America abandoned its war socialism after the armistice. "We planned in war!" they cried, imploring that they be allowed to plan in peace as well. Whereas progressives once saw America as joining, in Jane Addams's words, a "world-wide movement," now America was turning its back on Progress and slouching toward the classical liberalism of the founders. So they looked abroad for inspiration.

Two great "experiments" ignited their imaginations: Soviet Russia and Fascist Italy. The muckraker Lincoln Steffens returned from Russia to declare: "I have been to the future—and it works!" Just a year earlier, Steffens had proclaimed that God "formed Mussolini out of the rib of Italy." Ida Tarbell, the muckraker who "exposed" Standard Oil, took a similar view. She and other progressives referred to the "Russian-Italian" method, recognizing the kindred spirit that animated both Fascism and Bolshevism. Charles Beard, the left-wing economic historian, wrote in *The New Republic* that Mussolini's Italy was, "beyond question, an amazing experiment." Herbert Croly, *The New Republic*'s first editor, often defended Mussolini's crackdowns as necessary. Italian Fascism, he wrote, had "substituted movement for stagnation, purposive behavior for drifting, and visions of great future for collective pettiness and discouragement."

The New Deal did not try to copy Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, or Soviet Russia, as many on the old anti-Communist left and old right charged. Rather, it followed America's domestic fascist tradition, hoping to pick up where Wilson had left off. But the Brain Trusters did look at European Fascism and Bolshevism as proof that they were moving in the right direction. FDR tapped Hugh Johnson—the Army's representative to Wilson's War Industries Board—to run his National Recovery Administration, the cornerstone of the New Deal. There was no contradiction in the fact that Johnson openly admired Mussolini, hanging a portrait of the dictator on his office wall and handing out copies of the Italian Fascist text *The Corporate State* to members of the administration. Roosevelt himself privately acknowledged that "what we were doing in this country were some of the things that were being done in Russia and even some of the things that were being done under Hitler in Germany. But we are doing them in an orderly way."

Ah yes, the great defense against the charge of fascism: *We're more orderly!*

* * *

Today's liberals still worship the New Deal. But they look to another era for inspiration as well: the 1960s. Here too the parallels with classic fascism are too obvious to ignore. What are fascism's hallmarks? Among other things, the cult of action, the glorification of violence, the exaltation of youth, the perceived need to create "new men," the hatred of conventional morality and traditional authority, the adoration of "the street" and "people power," the justification of crime as political rebellion, and the denigration of the rule of law as a form of oppression. All recognizable features of the "youth movement" of the '60s.

"Their goal," historian John Toland writes of the German youth movement that became the feedstock of the Nazi party, "was to establish a youth culture for fighting the bourgeois trinity of school,

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home and church." Studies found that students generally outpaced any other group in their support for National Socialism because they wanted to belong to *die Bewegung*, the "Movement." The Nazis may have been striving for a utopian, thousand-year Reich, but their first instincts were radical: Destroy what exists. Tear it down. Eradicate *das System*—another term shared by the New Left and the fascists. Burn, baby, burn.

"The future of our struggle is the future of crime in the streets," declared Tom Hayden, a co-founder of Students for a Democratic Society. In June 1969 he declared the "need to expand our struggle to include a total attack on the courts." He dubbed the Black Panthers "our Viet Cong." Here was a street-based paramilitary group that sought the violent overthrow of the government in the name of racial separatism. Nothing fascistic here, folks.

During the guns-on-campus crisis at Cornell, then-professor Walter Berns fooled his students by reading them excerpts from Mussolini's speeches. The students cheered—until they learned the identity of the author. Peter Berger, a Jewish refugee from Austria and, at the time, a respected peace activist and left-wing sociologist, identified a long list of themes common to 1960s radicalism and European fascism. Irving Louis Horowitz, a revered leftist intellectual specializing in revolutionary thought, saw this fanaticism for what it was: "Fascism returns to the United States not as a right-wing ideology, but almost as a quasi-leftist ideology."

* * *

Some recognized that America would defend itself against the violent radicalism of the Weathermen and the Black Panthers. So there was a softer side to the fascistic awakening of the 1960s. These softer radicals were peaceful, process-oriented, and career-minded. But they remained no less dedicated to imposing "a new social order," and when pressed they defended the barbarians for having their "hearts in the right place."

It's worth remembering that it was Benito Mussolini who coined the word "totalitarian." Today that label has justifiably taken on the connotation of political evil. But that isn't how Mussolini meant it. He used it to convey "all-encompassing" and "holistic." His totalitarian society was one in which everyone belonged, no one was left out, *no child was left behind*. The state was a spiritual institution, intended to supplant traditional religion and give "meaning" to every individual. Mussolini defined Fascism in many ways, but his most enduring summation was "Everything within the State, nothing outside the State." Replace "State" with "Church and community," and you get a sense of what he meant. Fascism was a "politics of meaning" in which every citizen derived his personal worth from his relation to the state.

The 20th century's literature gave us two famous visions of a dystopian future: Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. For many years it was assumed that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was the more prophetic tale. No longer. The totalitarianism of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* reflects the age of Stalin, Lenin, Hitler, and Mussolini, dictators on a continent with a grand tradition of political and religious absolutism. *Brave New World* is a dystopia based on a future in which the world has been Americanized and the cult of youth defines society. Everything is *easy* under Huxley's World State. Everyone is *happy*. Indeed, the great dilemma for the reader of *Brave New World* is to answer the question, "What's wrong with it?"

Another important difference between the two dystopias: *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a vision of a masculine totalitarianism. Huxley's totalitarianism, by contrast, isn't a "boot stamping on a human face forever," as in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. It's one of smiling, happy, bioengineered people chewing hormone gum and blithely doing what they're told. Democracy is a forgotten fad because things are so much easier when the state makes all your decisions. In short, Huxley's totalitarianism is feminine. Orwell's is a daddy dystopia, where the bullying state maintains its authority through the manufacture of convenient enemies and useful crises in a climate of permanent war. Huxley's is a maternal misery, where man is smothered with care, not cruelty. But for all our talk about the "nanny state," political correctness, and the like, we still don't have the vocabulary to fight off *nice totalitarianism*, today's liberal fascism.

STAN HONDA/AFP

The face of liberal fascism in our time

Which brings us to Hillary Clinton, the leading but by no means sole exemplar of liberal fascism in our time. Deeply influenced by the socially engaged, "progressive" Methodism of her youth, Hillary was also a protégée of Saul Alinsky (and Barack Obama was trained by Alinsky's organization in Chicago), a man whose writings drip with fascist themes from the cult of action to the necessity of violent conflict to the dehumanization of the enemy as an abstract "other." While at Yale Law School, she volunteered to help the legal team of Black Panther Bobby Seale as he stood trial for murder. She also helped edit the *Yale Review of Law and Social Action*, a thoroughly radical organ that supported the Panthers and implicitly endorsed the murder of policemen. Despite Alinsky's urging, she declined to work with him full time, opting instead to pursue a legal career and change the system from within.

Clinton herself rejects the liberal label, preferring "modern progressive," and like the progressives—and the fascists—she subscribes to a fundamentally religious vision of politics. Her failed effort to launch a new "politics of meaning" was essentially a spiritual enterprise aimed at "redefining who we are as human beings in this postmodern age." Writing in the *Harvard Educational Review* in 1973, she scorned the idea that "families are private, non-political units whose interests subsume those of children." In 1996, she proclaimed to the United Methodist General Conference that Americans "have to start thinking and believing that there isn't really any such thing as someone else's child."

Mrs. Clinton's book *It Takes a Village* is a sweeping liberal-fascist manifesto. She asserts that children are born in a condition of "crisis" that urgently requires state intervention. This strategy was pioneered by the Children's Defense Fund—where Clinton

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served as chairman—in order to safeguard ever-increasing welfare payments. But it has a long pedigree. Ever since Plato's *Republic*, politicians, intellectuals, and priests have been fascinated with the idea of "capturing" children for social-engineering purposes. This is why Robespierre advocated that children be raised by the state, and why Hitler—who understood the importance of winning the hearts and minds of youth—once remarked, "When an opponent declares, 'I will not come over to your side,' I calmly say, 'Your child belongs to us already. . . . In a short time they will know nothing but this new community.'" Woodrow Wilson held that the primary mission of the educator was to make children as unlike their parents as possible. Feminist icon Charlotte Perkins Gilman denounced the "unchecked tyranny of the home" and declared the importance of recognizing "children . . . as citizens with rights to be guaranteed only by the state."

In Clinton's village, cadres of social workers, psychologists, teachers, and bureaucrats enforce the idea that there is no such thing as someone else's child. Government and business must collude at the most fundamental level to defend the "holistic" idea that everything is inside the village and nothing outside it. In Clinton's village, the cult of youth is expanded almost to infancy: "I have never met a stupid child," she insists, and "some of the best theologians I have ever met were five-year-olds."

Don't let the namby-pamby sentiment blind you to what is actually being said here. By defining the intellectual status of children up, she is defining adulthood down. In her vision, children will not become citizens, but citizens will be treated like children. Her liberal forebear Walter Lippmann had a similar outlook, observing that most citizens are "mentally children or barbarians" and must be forced to surrender their individuality to the new "order."

Mrs. Clinton has been working assiduously to redefine what it means to be *Mrs*. Clinton. But she hasn't been able to hide her true views. In Iowa, the weekend before the caucuses, she recalled her argument in *It Takes a Village* that every child needs a "champion" and went on to say, "I think the American people need a president who is their champion. And I've been running to be that champion." It didn't occur to her to note that the voters she's appealing to are not, in fact, children. Her village may have replaced the *fasces* with a hug, but an embrace from which you cannot escape is just a nicer form of tyranny.

* * *

In 1968, in a televised debate during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, when American fascists were taking to the streets outside the studio, Gore Vidal slandered William F. Buckley Jr. as a "crypto-Nazi." Vidal, a pagan, statist, and conspiracy theorist, had good reason to cast this charge as far from himself as possible. Buckley, a patriotic, pro-market, anti-totalitarian gentleman of impeccable manners, could take it no more and responded: "Now listen, you queer, stop calling me a crypto-Nazi or I'll sock you in the goddamn face and you'll stay plastered."

It was one of the few times in Buckley's long public life that he abandoned civility, and he instantly regretted it. Nonetheless, it's hard not to feel sympathy for him. For at some point it is necessary to throw down the gauntlet, to draw a line in the sand, to set a boundary, to cry at long last, "Enough is enough." To stand athwart "progress" and yell, "Stop!" That time is now. **NR**

■ **POLITICS**

The Waxman Cometh

But he doth not succeed

MARK HEMINGWAY

CONSIDERING that *Time* magazine once described Henry Waxman as having "all the panache of your parents' dentist," it's hard to imagine how he became the most feared member of Congress. The Californian is serving his 17th consecutive term, representing one of the country's safest Democratic districts (it includes West Hollywood and Beverly Hills). While other congressmen have sometimes been distracted by the business of reelection, Waxman has had the luxury of indulging his obsessive focus as a partisan legislator. Waxman admits he has no hobbies and rarely reads anything unrelated to politics; he's even had to publicly defend, in the pages of the *Washington Post*, the assertion that he has a sense of humor.

Waxman is that rare American politician who resides far to the left of the mainstream, but is also remarkably effective. He has been relentless in enacting his agenda—that of (in his words) a "proud, self-confessed, unapologetic liberal." His numerous successes include expanding Medicaid, clearing the way for litigation against the tobacco industry, and co-authoring the Clean Air Act. He is a notably zealous partisan.

So when the Democrats took back Congress in 2006, it was not the leadership of Harry Reid or Nancy Pelosi that struck fear in the hearts of Republicans. It was, rather, Waxman's takeover of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform that was (in the *Washington Post*'s characterization) "the Bush administration's worst nightmare."

The chairman of that committee is the only person in Congress who has unilateral power to issue subpoenas without a committee vote. And the panel's purview is nearly limitless: If something has a potential impact on federal policy, Waxman can call hearings and investigate it. He is known for his brutal and relentless questioning style. Once he has ensnared his prey. he requires witnesses to testify under oath so that, if there's even a whiff of imperfect recollection, his staff—which features some of the most dogged and experienced operatives on Capitol Hill—is likely to sniff it out, exposing witnesses to perjury charges.

As the first year of the first Democratic-controlled Congress in twelve years comes to a close, Democrats are busy pointing fingers for their notable failures. Funding for the war is still intact; the Democrats' ambitious reform agenda has been stymied; the leadership has been unable to pass even basic appropriations bills in a timely fashion. But while Democrats are angry at Pelosi and Reid, few seem to have taken note of the fact that Waxman's committee has been a bust as well. Given his fearsome reputation, expectations were high that he could use his position to hold Republicans' feet to

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the fire. Yet even with virtually unchecked power, Waxman was able to do little more than generate splashy press coverage and badger the administration, with meager results.

SHOW TRIALS

Waxman accomplished little, but his endless parade of hearings did prove to be a significant nuisance. Ironically enough, Republicans are themselves to blame for Waxman's immense power: The unilateral-subpoena authority was created by a rules change made after Republicans took over in 1994, and the Government Reform Committee was tasked with investigating the hydra-headed Clinton scandals. Former chairman Dan Burton used his authority to issue over 1,000 subpoenas; to some extent, this bold exercise of power was needed to do an end-around on Waxman, who as ranking Democrat fought tenaciously to defend the Clinton presidency. Waxman's defense of Clinton is now the stuff of legend. He famously staged a Democratic walkout from another House committee that had prepared a damaging report on the Travelgate scandal, storming out and bellowing, "I leave this committee with absolute disgust for it and its chairman!"

His work in the Government Reform Committee was equally dramatic. In one typical episode during the John Huang fundraising scandal (as recounted in *The Weekly Standard*), two Waxman staffers tried to undermine the credibility of one David Wang, an associate of Huang who was testifying against him. Waxman's staffers tired to get Wang's father—an old Chinese immigrant with a limited command of English—to sign a statement contradicting his son's testimony. Wang's father refused to sign the statement. Instead of being embarrassed by his staffers' aggressive tactics, Waxman distributed a statement shortly afterward repeating the claim that Wang's father had contradicted his son's testimony—despite the fact that Wang's father had already publicly refuted Waxman's claims.

Waxman appeared untroubled by these tactics, but nonetheless cried foul every time Burton so much as lifted a finger to pry into allegations against the Clintons. In one letter he sent Burton, he complained that Burton's investigators had committed the crime of knocking "loudly and persistently" on the door of a potential witness. In another instance, Waxman distributed a letter containing a text labeled "SUGGESTED PROCEDURE FOR BEGINNING INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWS" that he insisted investigators read before interviewing any potential witnesses. It read like *Miranda* rights on steroids, clearly designed to prevent witnesses from cooperating:

> As a potential witness, we would like to ask you some questions. It is your choice whether to speak with us or not to speak with us. You have every right not to speak with us. If you choose to speak with us, we must advise you of several facts. First, it is important to be truthful, because it is a federal crime for you to make false statements to a government official. Second, you may terminate the interview at any time or decline to answer some questions and still answer other questions. Third, in the future, you may be called as a witness to testify in a televised public hearing. You have the right to speak with a lawyer before you speak with us. You also have the right to have a lawyer present during questioning if you wish.

Waxman proved an incredibly effective firewall for the Clintons. But while he could play good defense while in the minority, he was stymied at every turn when he tried to go on offense after George W. Bush entered the White House. In 2001, Waxman's partisanship got the better of him. Since the minority on his committee lacked the ability to instigate their own hearings, he was responsible for prodding the General Accounting Office—Congress's auditing arm—to file a lawsuit about the influence energy companies had on Bush-administration policy. This tactic was remarkably aggressive; in 2002, a federal judge ruled that a congressional agency such as the GAO didn't have the legal standing to file such a lawsuit, and—even more surprising—the GAO did not appeal the decision.

In 2006, Waxman was licking his chops at the prospect of taking over the chairmanship. "I suppose some people have had a free ride for the last six years," he told *U.S. News*.

TWIN OBSESSIONS

In a telling early maneuver, Waxman changed the name of the Government Reform Committee to the Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Putting "Oversight" first is apt: Waxman is trying to oversee everything, and reform very little.

Early in the Congress, he tried to portray himself as a taxpayer watchdog, rather than acknowledging his history as a partisan pit bull. In an interview with *Federal Times*, he chastised the former majority on the committee for "acting like Republicans first and leaders of an independent branch of government second." And, according to the *Times* reporter, Waxman was "proud of the fact that he's never issued a subpoena, and contrary to the storm of subpoenas some are predicting, he vows to try friendlier tactics first." (The pledge of friendlier tactics didn't last very long.)

Though the committee has held hearings on a broad range of topics—at the expense of its credibility and its limited time—Waxman has been fixated on two subjects: Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Blackwater, the private security firm operating in Iraq.

In April, after Rice declined Waxman's informal invitation, the committee issued a subpoena for her to appear before it to discuss the Bush administration's charge that Saddam Hussein had sent emissaries to Niger to try to acquire uranium for a nuclear-weapons program. The State Department had already sent long letters about the matter to the committee, hoping to "obviate the need" for a hearing. Issuing a subpoena for a secretary of state to testify about a matter that had been publicly debated in and out of government for several years was seen by many as an act of hubris. Rice refused to testify about pre-war intelligence, calling Waxman's bluff and setting up a potentially ugly battle over the separation of powers. Undeterred, Waxman proceeded to call on Rice to testify regarding Iraqi corruption, political reconciliation in Iraq, and a September 16 shooting incident in which Blackwater guards killed eight Iraqis in Baghdad. In 2007, Waxman was responsible for 18 separate inquiries into State's activities.

Rice finally testified in late October. The following exchange on the scope of Iraqi corruption was typical of Waxman's proceeding and the committee's needlessly combative tone:

> REP. JOHN YARMUTH (D., KY.): Any person with half a brain would understand that the situation is not good or else you'd want to talk about [Iraqi corruption].
>
> SECRETARY RICE: Since I'm certain we all have a brain, let me say it this way—there is a very bad problem of corruption in Iraq. It is a problem in ministries, it is a problem in government, it is a problem with officials.

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It's hard to imagine anyone walked away from the hearing enlightened.

During the hearing, Rice was also asked about Waxman's other obsession—the Blackwater firm, which is responsible for providing State's security detail in Iraq. On the surface, investigating Blackwater should be a slam dunk for Waxman and his committee. The idea of private citizens empowered to use deadly force in a U.S. war zone without a clear legal jurisdiction would seem to be exactly the kind of issue that the Oversight and Government Reform Committee is designed to address. Yet the zeal with which Waxman has gone after Blackwater has been counterproductive. For example, he has repeatedly accused the company of tax evasion and financial impropriety, claiming that it is illegally classifying its security workers in Iraq as independent contractors rather than employees. Blackwater disputes the illegality of this, and nothing has come of the charges.

On September 16, the Blackwater shooting incident occurred. Waxman scheduled a hearing on the incident for October 2, barely two weeks later. Seven Republican members signed a letter asking Waxman to postpone the hearing until the official investigation was finished. Waxman went ahead with the October 2 hearing anyway, and the FBI—fearing a tainting of the investigation—requested that he not discuss specifics of the event. At the hearing, Blackwater CEO Erik Prince was harangued about any number of other matters related to his company. Since the September 16 event was off-limits, Waxman began the hearing by detailing brand-new charges—about the company's role in a 2004 plane crash in Afghanistan. A 15-page memo about the matter was released just prior to the hearing, before Republicans were given a chance to look at it, prompting them to complain they had been "sandbagged" and to accuse Waxman of routinely violating committee rules.

DRIVE-BY OVERSIGHT

Following that hearing, details came to light that raised questions about Waxman's motives for investigating Blackwater. On December 13, 2006, the California law firm of Callahan and Blaine wrote a letter to five legislators, including Waxman. Callahan and Blaine represents the families of four Blackwater contractors killed in Fallujah in 2004, the infamous incident in which the security contractors were dragged through the streets and hung from a bridge. The letter, titled "War Profiteering and Blackwater Security Consulting," said: "We hereby petition you to initiate, support and continue the Congressional investigations into . . . these extremely Republican companies, such as Blackwater."

Waxman called his first hearing on Blackwater for February 7—less than two months later. The day before the hearing, Rep. Lynn Westmoreland (R., Ga.) sent a letter to the committee expressing concern that the hearing was not focused on public-policy issues, but rather "advancing private litigation matters." The letter also stated that Waxman's staff had already informed Westmoreland that the hearing would "closely track the litigation file." Indeed, the panels at the hearing included only Callahan and Blaine's clients and Blackwater. There was also some question as to whether the committee was attempting to subpoena and make public some information that Callahan and Blaine had requested and been denied access to in the context of their civil suit. Then, on September 20, just four days after the Baghdad shooting incident, Waxman announced his intention to hold additional hearings on Blackwater. Columnist Robert Novak reported that, on that very same day, attorney David J. Callahan contacted Blackwater's counsel and told them that "the company can bury" bad publicity generated by the congressional attention by settling the lawsuit with the four families for $20 million.

The committee hasn't unearthed very much actual wrongdoing, but it has been remarkably successful in one regard: generating favorable press stories for Democrats to campaign on. The committee's plethora of investigation topics—e.g., contractor fraud in Iraq, pharmaceutical companies, Valerie Plame, and the death of NFL player–turned–soldier Pat Tillman—is decidedly media-friendly, and heavily weighted toward partisan Democratic issues. "It's drive-by oversight," one Republican source close to the committee told NATIONAL REVIEW. "Something makes the news one week, there's a hearing the next." Whether the hearings result in any government reform is irrelevant; so is the question of whether the committee's critique is fair. "[Waxman's] the judge and jury and the evening news is the executioner," the source said.

And Waxman, despite his famous lack of panache, has exhibited a flair for giving the media what they want, and thus generating positive press coverage. Government hearings are usually dry affairs involving multiple panels—first federal authorities are questioned, then congressional investigators from legislative-branch agencies such as the Government Accountability Office testify, and the last panel might include citizens from home districts with an interest in the subject matter. Waxman's committee has reversed the order of the proceedings, putting media-friendly testimony up front and sometimes eliminating the involvement of any government authorities at all, as he did with the Blackwater hearing in February. "People don't stay around after the sob stories are done," the source says.

If congressional approval ratings are anything to go by, however, the fleeting positive publicity surrounding the committee's scattershot investigations doesn't seem to be helping Democrats. The Democratic-led Congress has lower approval ratings than the historic lows of President Bush—lower, even, than the ratings of the scandal-plagued Republican Congress it was elected to replace in 2006.

After the dust from the media storm clears, the numbers may ultimately tell the tale. In purely legislative terms, it's hard to see the committee as being even remotely effective. Of the 562 pieces of legislation that have originated in or been referred to the committee, 49 have become law. But 47 of them are directly related to one of the committee's most arcane and irrelevant functions—the naming of post offices. That leaves two pieces of legislation: the reauthorization of the Extend D.C. College Access Act of 1999 and the D.C. Home Rule Act (the District's non-voting member of the House is on Waxman's committee). Neither bill is much of a government reform. A few—just a few—more substantial pieces of legislation are pending, having passed either the committee or the House; but a Democratic leadership that has trouble getting basic appropriations bills passed probably won't be able to push through any controversial reform legislation.

So Waxman will wax for the cameras, but take away the media spotlight and it becomes obvious that the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, regarded as one of the few bright spots in an otherwise disastrous Democratic Congress, is really a failure as well. **NR**

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the bent pin

FLORENCE KING

Her *Other* Two Opponents

POLLSTERS out to discover Hillary's psychological effect on the male sex should abandon the standard practice of asking questions, because probing men's fear and loathing of female dominance forces them into strong silent mode, even when, like Tucker Carlson, they are neither strong nor silent.

The way around this male policy of ask-but-don't-tell is to study the obsessions men sprout when they think women are getting too powerful and threatening. Take the '70s, the bra-burning Ms. decade of Women's Lib when feminism was at its height. Now ask yourself, What else was the '70s the decade of? Answer: *Jaws.*

On to the '80s, the decade of Geraldine Ferraro, entrenched abortion rights, and *Crocodile Dundee.* Thereafter, during the Hillary-in-training '90s and beyond, we were introduced to every cold-blooded man-eater known to herpetology, ichthyology, and the Discovery Channel: anacondas, boa constrictors, barracudas, piranhas, giant squids, and—the latest—killer jellyfish. All the while, Hollywood agents were still getting over-the-transom movie scripts with titles like *Ink* and *Bites*, written by male Scheherazades compulsively driven to tell one more story about being dragged down and eaten alive by something with a really big mouth.

Election '08 calls for a real savior, a St. George to rescue men from the dragon, and lo, he walks among us. He is Bear Grylls, star of Discovery's *Man vs. Wild*, a how-to course in surviving in jungles, deserts, mountains, and snowy tundras while armed with nothing but your two hands and . . . well, those other two things.

If Bear sounds like a muscle-bound troglodyte, guess again. His name is Edward Grylls, he went to Eton, and his father was Sir Michael Grylls, a Tory politician. He climbed Mt. Everest at 23 and served in the British Special Forces, where he learned the survival techniques he demonstrates on his show. Now 33, he is clearly a "gentleman" in the full British sense of class distinctions, which is what makes his stomach-turning exploits so fascinating.

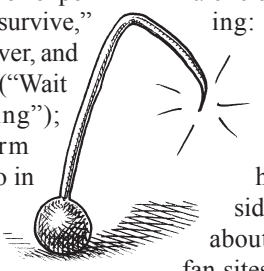
Each show has Bear parachuting into the middle of nowhere and making his way to the middle of somewhere without dying of thirst, starvation, or exposure. "Only the toughest can survive," he proclaims in his own voiceover, and proves it by eating a live snake ("Wait till the muscles stop twitching"); a wriggly muddy earthworm ("Tastes like he went to the loo in my mouth"); and an uncooperative spider ("He bit my lip on the way down").

Sometimes he cooks his catch, like the piranha he speared while standing in the river where they ran. Not to worry; the river was too narrow for a school big enough to take all the flesh off a man in five minutes; only a few could get through, so Bear's Errol Flynn legs, as well as . . . those other two things, were unharmed. He cooked the piranha over a campfire, like the horned viper he ate in the Sahara, but the sheep's eyeball was too delicate to roast so he poached it in a hot spring in the Andes. "You'll find hidden strengths you never knew existed," he promises. Indeed you will. There was no hot spring in the Sahara when the Berbers offered him a goat's testicle, so he ate it raw.

He's at his manliest in hot, dry climates where the need for water gives him a golden, as it were, chance to pee in his canteen and take a swig ("salty"). At least it was his own, which is more than can be said for the water in the elephant dung he scooped up and squeezed into his mouth. But his finest peeing hour came when he spent the night in a dead camel's belly.

Finding an aged camel that had died in the Sahara, he first skinned it to make himself a blanket, then cut open the belly to find the rumina where camels store their extra water. Camels are huge and have lots of entrails—brown, green, purple, yellow, pink, in all shapes and sizes. Bear's search might strike male viewers as the essence of strength and resourcefulness, but all I could think of were those times when women root through our chaotic handbags babbling, "I just know it's in here someplace."

After he finds the rumina he gathers up all the guts in a tarp and drags them off to keep the jackals at bay, but to keep them away from the camel's carcass while he's sleeping in it he must put the pee hex on them. This he does by peeing in a circle around the camel, explaining: "This doesn't work with female pee because it hasn't enough testosterone in it. Sorry about that, girls."



The battle of the sexes has always had its comical side but there is nothing funny about the comments on Bear's fan sites. Their tone is one of furious adoration and feral worship. He has "balls as big as church bells, can play the guitar with his d***, he is God without the beard." "He should be treated like a Chinese emperor and allowed to f*** anybody he wants . . ." Another, intended as a compliment, calls him "the greatest mother-f***er in the world!"

It's easy to picture these fans. They are the unsocialized males in George Gilder's *Sexual Suicide*, deprived by feminism of the ability to prove their manhood by supporting a family. They used to make good money; "graduate from high school, get a factory job, and earn enough to get married," as one anti-globalist describes it. But now the jobs are gone, along with the kind of women who used to look up to men and depend on them. Now they are "naked nomads," in Gilder's words, alienated and potentially dangerous.

Hillary could calm them down by playing dumb, for instance saying, "U.S. Americans need more maps," but why ask for the moon when Bear has the stars? **NR**

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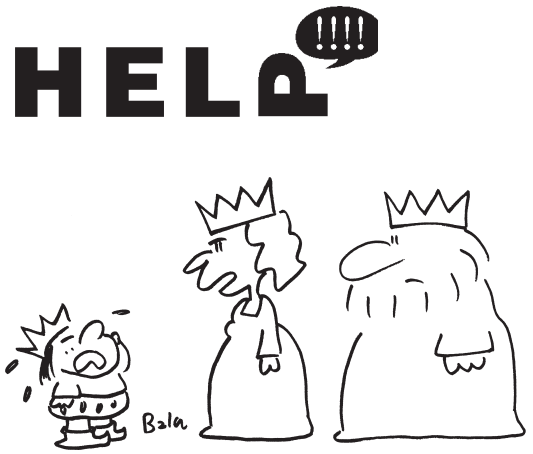
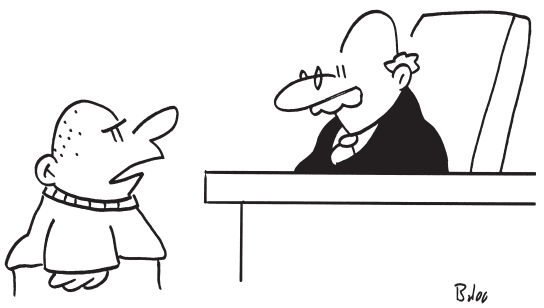
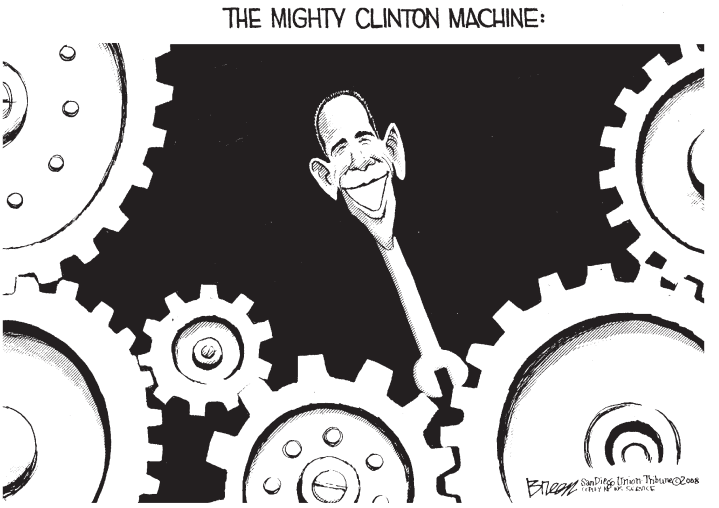


"I don't want you playing with those awful Lear girls any more!"



"Yeah, I shot the guy, but only because I was misled by my advisers."



"DON'T WORRY, I HAVE EXPERIENCE. I'M NOT A SURGEON, BUT I WAS MARRIED TO ONE FOR EIGHT YEARS."

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ROB LONG

NSA Intercept Radio Frequency Surveillance

Static

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #1: "Hello? Control? Is she there?"
UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE #2: "She's approaching the stage right now. Bill is behind her. They're waving. People are cheering. You can't see this?"
UMV#1: "We're not getting video feed in the van. It's going straight to the focus group. Guys? Hello, focus-group moderator? Are you on the line?"
UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE: "We're up, Mark. We've got video and audio. Dials are set at fifty. When do you want to start?"
UMV#1: "Focus group is up and online. Is the senator's earpiece working?"
UMV#2: "Senator, can you hear me? Point to someone in the crowd and give a thumbs-up if you can hear me."
UMV#1: "Working?"
UMV#2: "Working! She gave the sign. Okay, Senator, whenever you're ready, we have the focus group standing by."
UFV: "They're liking the smiling and the waving."
UMV#2: "Keep smiling and waving, Senator."
UFV: "Okay, okay, and now she's talking . . . and dials are . . . dials are down. We're losing women 30 to 55 when she's talking."
UMV#2: "Um, Senator, maybe downplay the talking. Smile and wave some more."
UFV: "Back up! People are liking this!"
UMV#1: "Guys, she's got a speech to give, okay? She can't just smile and wave."
UMV#2: "Wait a sec. She's crying. Is she crying?"
UFV: "Dials up! We're liking the crying here across the board: young, old, male, female. When she's not talking and when she's crying she's really hitting some high numbers. Can she just do that?"
UMV#1: "Guys! Come on. Let's get this speech over with, okay?"
UMV#2: "Senator, the thinking here is that you just plow on ahead."
UFV: "Dials back to fifty."
UMV#2: "Okay, now she's thanking everyone—she's thanking the team, the crowd. She's thanking Bill . . ."
UFV: "Dials down . . ."
UMV#2: "She's thanking her opponents, she's talking about the future . . ."
UFV: "Dials way, way down. Guys, I know this is a farewell speech, but she's losing most of the age groups with this."
UMV#2: "Okay, now she's talking about fighting for her initiatives in the Senate."
UFV: "Dials flat. They think she's angry."
UMV#2: "Senator, we're getting a lot of anger here. Can you look happier that you're dropping out of the race?"
UMV#1: "Look, just let her get through this, okay?"
UFV: "Women and men 30 to 45 think it's weird that she's smiling so much when she was just crying before and is clearly really angry. Can you tell her to . . ."

UMV#1: "To what? To be more normal? Look, guys, that ship has sailed. Let her just do this and get it over with."
UMV#2: "Senator, you're doing fine. Keep going."
UMV#1: "Hey, guys, have you decided who you're going to go with next?"
UFV: "I'm thinking Obama."
UMV#2: "I've put some feelers out to the Romney folks. But apparently he doesn't use focus groups."
UFV: "What?!"
UMV#2: "I'm kidding. He's got about thirty-seven of them, but most of the numbers-crunching they outsource to Bangalore in real time. I'm going to handle the groups that report into his left ear. You know, facial expressions, hand gestures, that sort of thing. Stuart Stevens is handling all of the stuff that goes into his right ear."
UFV: "He's got groups going into both ears?"
UMV#2: "Oh, yeah. And he's got one of those e-stim patches on his collarbone, tapping out electronic signals. He's pretty well covered."
UFV: "Cool. Is there a spot on his team for me?"
UMV#2: "I'll ask. They were talking about creating a new team to send focus-group e-stim signals to his toes—you know, like we used to do with Gore—remember?"
UFV: "Oh, God, yeah, I remember. We'd buzz the little toe on the left foot to tell him to smile more; the middle toe on the right foot meant he was losing men 25 to 50. God. And he always got the toes mixed up."
UMV#2: "Romney's toes are neatly separate and distinct, is what I'm hearing. So he might have a team for each toe. I'll put a word in for you, if you like."
UFV: "Hey, thanks!"
UMV#2: "No problem."
UMV#1: "Uh, guys? Guys? You know, you're still on her payroll, okay?"
UFV: "Oh, right, right. Sorry. Where is she right now?"
UMV#1: "She's talking about how she's looking forward to being able to spend more time with Bill."
UFV: "Dials down!"
UMV#1: "They just sort of side-hugged."
UFV: "Dials way down. Actually, the focus group is laughing. All segments. And they're moving the dials into the low-credibility zone."
UMV#1: "Just let it go."
UMV#2: "Senator, they love you!"
UMV#1: "Almost done. Almost. She's waving. She's waving, and she's . . . she's . . . she's left the stage. She's gone."
UFV: "Wow! Dials way, way, way up! I've never seen numbers like this. They're really loving this."
UMV#2: "Great job, Senator! You've never been more popular!"

End transcript.

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THE ROYAL COUPLE

Get Florence King's *STET, Damnit!* and *Deja Reviews*

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STET, Damnit!: The Misanthrope's Corner, 1991 to 2002 is the complete, unabridged collection of Miss King's beloved "Misanthrope's Corner" columns, with 500-plus pages of clock-cleaning verbiage that derides dunderheads, disembowels sacred cows, trashes trends, and lampoons the lame-brained. For over a decade the "Queen of Mean" used *NR*'s back page as a two-by-four to smack upside the thick heads of busybodies, chin-droolers, feel-gooders, store-greeters, plagiarists, teddy-bear memorializers, whiners, crisis-counseling apostles, and many more of society's most annoying types. Today—no matter how dated the topic of her column—readers of this hearty collection will find her sharp, crafted prose still dazzles and endures. Each piece is as fresh as a slap in the face, as biting as an angry asp, and as funny as all heck!

That's exactly the case with *Deja Reviews: Florence King All Over Again*—the handsome 360-page hardcover collection of every one of the glorious essays and book reviews Miss King penned for *National Review* and *The American Spectator* up until her (now happily revoked!) retirement in 2002.

A must for any fan, *Deja Reviews* includes classic essays such as "A Wasp Looks at Lizzie Borden" and "South Mouth: Why Liberals Hate Dixie"—plus 59 book reviews, the milieu where Miss King's talents are on their most glorious display. Pulitzer Prize-winner Paul Greenberg writes in his insightful introduction: "my favorite part of this collection may be the book reviews. Florence King's specialty is the good review of a bad book. It would be hard, it might be impossible, to top this opening paragraph of one such review:

> Back in the Cold War, whenever I had to review an unreadable book, I always comforted myself with the thought, 'Maybe the Russians will drop the Bomb and I won't have to finish reading this.' Those were the days. This time, stuck with *A Pilgrim's Way: The Personal Story of the Episcopal Bishop Charged with Heresy for Ordaining a Gay Man Who Was in a Committed Relationship*, by the Rt. Rev. Walter C. Righter, author of the longest subtitle in publishing history, all I could hope for was an asteroid.

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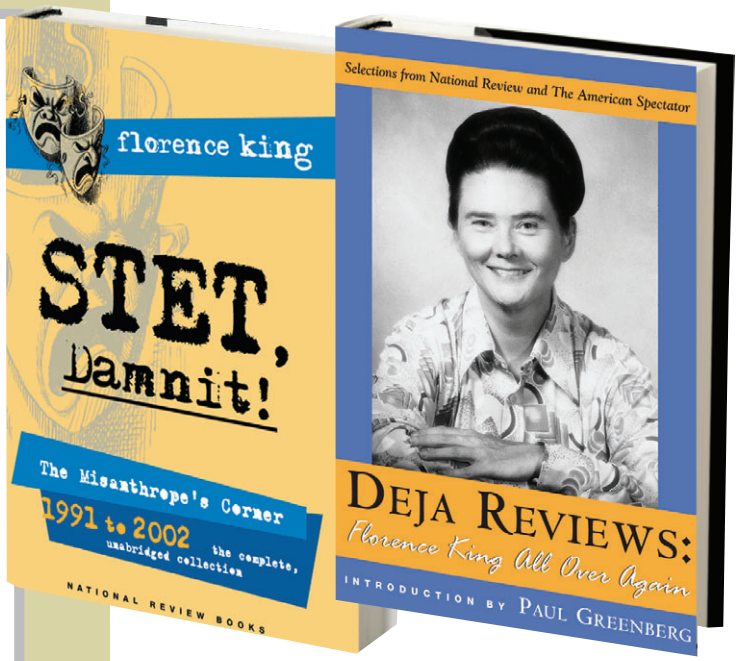

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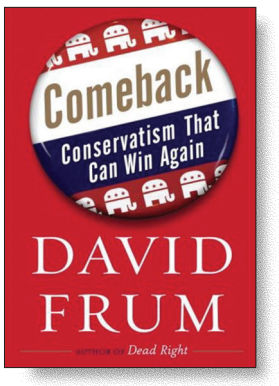

Comeback: Conservatism That Can Win Again, by David Frum (Doubleday, 213 pp., $24.95)

RAMESH PONNURU

Conservatives discontented with President Bush and his party are thick on the ground these days. David Frum is one of them, but he does not share their most common complaint—that Bush has failed to govern as a conservative and thus trashed the Republican brand. Frum points out that Bush won in 2000 in large part by presenting himself as a better heir to Bill Clinton than Al Gore would have been. Bush would preserve the status quo, welfare state very much included, without drawing national attention to Washington with tawdry scandals. Gore, meanwhile, ran on a promise to take on "the powerful" on behalf of "the people."

Had Bush run on a more conservative platform, Frum argues, he would have lost. Had he governed more conservatively, he would be even more unpopular than he is now. Conservative journalists and policy experts complain that Bush added an expensive prescription-drug benefit to the already-unaffordable Medicare program. "But," writes Frum, "public support for the benefit ranged between 80 percent and 90 percent through the first Bush term. . . . On issues from Social Security to health care to environmental protection, conservatives find themselves on the less popular side of the great issues of the day. That does not mean that conservatives are wrong. But it does mean that we are likely to lose if we continue repeating old formulas without adapting them to new times."

To react to the disappointments of the Bush years with nostalgia for the Reagan years is a big mistake, in Frum's view. Few of the country's problems "can be fixed by Reagan-style tax cutting and deregulation." But it is conservative themes, not just conservative policies, that need to be updated. "[H]ow many Americans in these opening years of the 21st century feel too little liberty to do what they want to do?" We have more liberty, and less order, than we used to have, and popular anxieties have shifted in response. The cultural issues that have brought Republicans to power over the last generation have also lost their potency. "FDR's party eventually accepted that nobody remembered Herbert Hoover any more. How many more elections can conservatives win by campaigning against Abbie Hoffman and Bobby Seale?"

Frum is, however, himself rightly nostalgic for the idealism and empiricism of Reagan-era conservatism. That conservatism saw accurately the challenges of its moment and devised ways to meet them. Younger conservatives have not produced successors to Milton Friedman and James Q. Wilson, people who are both willing and able to do the intellectual work necessary today. "A new generation hungers for answers and solutions, and too often they hear only polemics, wisecracks, accusations, and talking points." In his treatment of what ails conservatism today, Frum is penetrating and wise—and indeed, to quote the title of one of his earlier books, dead right.

Frum not only identifies a vacuum but attempts to fill it. He gives advice to conservatives and Republicans about how they should tackle issue after issue. On some questions he wants conservatives to be bolder. He thinks that racial preferences in college admissions have removed an incentive for bright teenagers to work hard in school, and wants to abolish them. In the name of international competitiveness, he would abolish corporate taxes and most other taxes on investment. Immigration reform should aim not only to halt illegal immigration but to increase rather than decrease the skill level of our labor force. Frum even puts in a good word for term limits, a conservative cause now remembered only by, well, nostalgics.

On other topics Frum goes off in new directions. He wants stiff carbon taxes, to combat both global warming and our geopolitically harmful dependence on oil. He thinks conservatives should regard obesity as an issue of public concern. Some conservatives have championed the reform of prisons, for example to reduce the horrifying incidence of rape within their walls; Frum believes such reform should be a much higher priority.

He wants a tighter alliance with India. "While India sent its prime minister of the day to the memorial service at Ground Zero on November 11, 2001, nobody has ever traveled from Washington to attend any of the Indian memorials to its many casualties," he laments. He thinks the U.S. government should develop its nation-building capacity. The next Republican administration, he argues, should seek legislative support for its preferred methods of dealing with terrorist detainees rather than relying on unilateral executive authority.

Like the bits of advice dropped in a company suggestion box, some of Frum's recommendations are worthy. Others are too vague to be helpful: He tells Republican politicians to "stand for marriage," and against the proliferation of substitutes for it, but cautions against pushing for a constitutional amendment on the subject. So what does he think they should do, other than say that they "stand for marriage"?

His advice to pro-lifers is unpersuasive. When South Dakota legislators banned abortion with no exception for rape, he says, an initiative to ratify the law lost by a margin of 8 to 1. That result, in that state, demonstrates that pro-lifers cannot get much farther than they already have. Actually, the initiative lost by 56–44 percent. What it demonstrates is that attempting to ban abortion in the case of rape is unpopular in every part of the country. Since rape accounts for less than 2 percent of all abortions, however, pro-lifers have plenty of room to keep advancing.

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O JAY, CAN YOU SEE?

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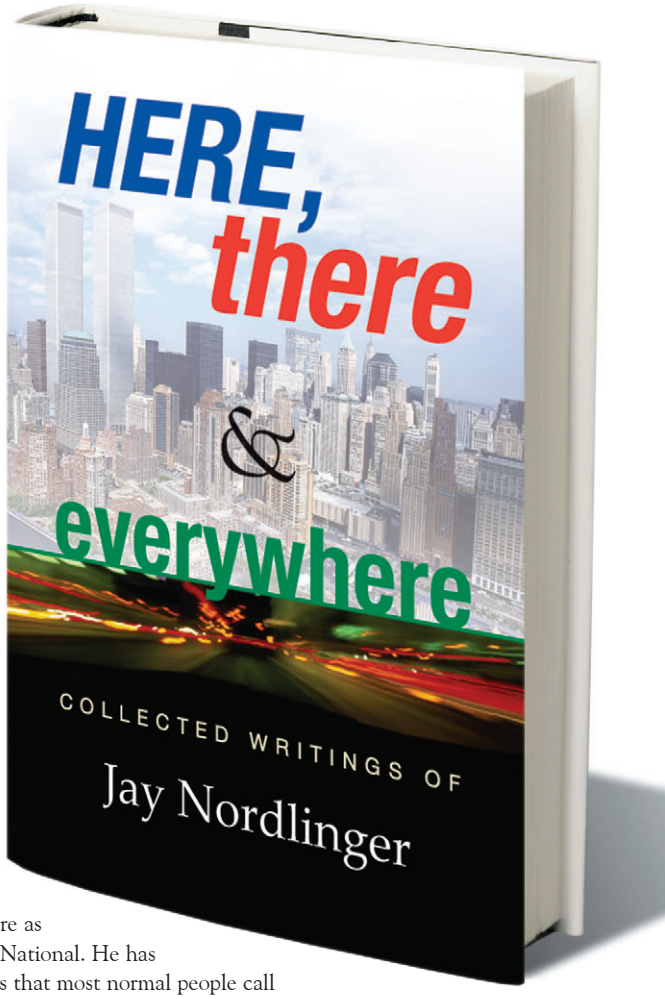

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Frum thinks that President Bush drew the line in the wrong place on stem-cell research. The next Republican president should "defend the clear and powerful principle that human life should not be bought and sold. After all: If the embryos cannot be bought and sold, the incentive for the research will disappear." Actually, President Bush has called for that exact policy, and it has gone nowhere in Congress. If it were enacted, it would not have the effect Frum desires. The embryos used in research are generally donated rather than sold.

Frum's ideas on taxes are, for the most part, conventionally conservative. He departs from supply-side orthodoxy a bit in that he favors protecting the child tax credit from inflation and extending it to all working parents. I think a substantial increase in that credit would be good policy and good politics. Frum, on the other hand, does not think that Republicans can any longer use tax policy to win elections. He does not have any illusions that Republicans will come back to power by proposing his favored pro-investment reforms, but rather hopes that the public will put up with it while being attracted to other parts of the Republican agenda.

But that agenda may not be sufficiently compelling for the package to work. I can see the moral imperative for prison reform, but not much political advantage in it. Block-granting Medicaid—that is, giving states a fixed amount of money to spend on it—is an excellent idea, but Democrats, the press, and governors of both parties would portray it as an exercise in savagery. Tackling obesity is unlikely to be a vote-winner, either.

In his comments on this subject, Frum leaves behind not only the conservative consensus of the day, as he intends, but conservative habits of mind. Frum would have conservatives "speak out against" obesity, in order "to change social expectations and standards." He does not stop to consider several questions. Are many of the most overweight people genetically predisposed to obesity and thus likely to suffer rather than benefit from these changed norms? Do people generally lack an incentive to lose weight as it is? Would a public campaign mostly succeed in getting mildly overweight people to slim down, and if so would any great public-health benefit be realized? The one question that Frum addresses is whether a citizen's weight is any of his government's business. He says yes, so long as the government is paying for a lot of health expenses. In which case there is no principled reason to reject compulsory calisthenics.

Frum's discussion of health care follows the pattern of the book as a whole: The diagnosis is extremely convincing, but not the prescription. He points out that inflation in the health sector has eaten away wage increases for middle-income workers, which is one reason the public is so grumpy even though the economy has been growing. He argues, surely correctly, that merely resisting a government takeover will not be effective.

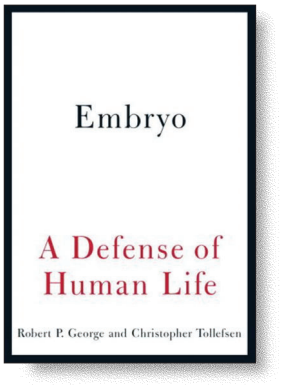
Frum's discussion of health care follows the pattern of the book as a whole: The diagnosis is more convincing than the prescription.

But he is somewhat elusive when it comes to suggesting what conservatives should do. Without explaining why, he asserts that conservatives need to stand for "universal health insurance." He endorses letting people buy health insurance from out-of-state, thus letting them bypass their own states' costly regulations—a fine idea that wouldn't achieve universal coverage. He writes favorably about mandating the purchase of health insurance, on the dubious premise that people who do not buy insurance raise everyone else's costs. (Studies suggest that the effect is small.) That would achieve his goal, but he doesn't actually endorse it.

He has no strategy on education, just the hope that the No Child Left Behind Act, by requiring schools to report their test scores, will open people's eyes to the public system's failure and thus make them more receptive to conservative ideas such as vouchers.

I've been tough on some of Frum's ideas, in the interest of furthering the necessary conversation that he is trying to start. Our cupboard is nearly bare, and too few conservatives have noticed it. David Frum can't restock it by himself. **NR**

Rock-Solid Logic



Embryo: A Defense of Human Life, by Robert P. George and Christopher Tollefsen (Doubleday, 256 pp., $23.95)

WESLEY J. SMITH

THIS book is bigger than the sum of its parts. The pro-life apologist and Princeton professor Robert P. George and his co-author, University of South Carolina philosopher Christopher Tollefsen, don't just make a compelling and rational case—no religious arguments here—for the biological humanity and personhood of embryos. They also demonstrate convincingly that human life matters morally at every stage of existence, simply because it is human. And despite the high academic credentials of both authors, *Embryo* is no scholarly tome. Instead, while George and Tollefsen write very intelligently and mount their case with impeccable logical precision, the book is highly readable and their argument readily accessible to the average reader.

Their topic could not be more important. Across a broad spectrum of philosophies and ideologies, the unique moral

Mr. Smith is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute, an attorney for the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, and a special consultant to the Center for Bioethics and Culture. He is currently writing a book about the animal-rights movement.

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importance of human life is under dedicated siege. Animal-rights advocates, for example, reject human exceptionalism, claiming that according human life unique value is "speciesism," a perceived wrong asserted to be as odious as racism. What really matters, they insist, is the ability to feel pain. Hence, since both cows and human beings experience that sensation, bovines are our moral equals and cattle ranching is akin to slavery.

The concept of speciesism is also accepted in the field of utilitarian bioethics, which might be described as essentially an anti-humanism movement. According to the likes of Peter Singer and the British bioethicist John Harris, being human does not convey value. Rather, what matters is "personhood": a moral status that must be earned by possessing sufficient cognitive capacities, such as being self-aware or valuing one's own existence. Supporters of personhood theory argue that human beings who are not persons do not have the right to life and can be treated ethically as mere natural resources. And this is held to be true at both ends of life's spectrum. Thus, articles in medical and bioethics journals around the world have urged that human beings diagnosed as being in a persistent vegetative state can ethically be harvested for their organs because they have permanently lost their personhood, while creating embryos through cloning for the purpose of stem-cell research is acceptable ethically because embryos have not yet attained personhood.

Meanwhile, many philosophical materialists deny that species distinctions are even real, given that most of our genes are shared by other mammals, opening the door in some minds to using the most weak and vulnerable people in place of animals in medical research. Then there are the so-called deep ecologists who misanthropically claim that we are a vermin species infecting the living Gaia, the solution to which is a radical reduction of human population to fewer than 1 billion.

It is into this ethical wind shear that George and Tollefsen jump in defense of the moral value of all human life. They do this powerfully by openly asserting the absolute moral equality of what many consider the least of human organisms: the early embryo.

Their apologia begins with proof of the biological humanity of the embryo from

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the moment it comes into being at the conclusion of fertilization. (The fertilized egg is actually not an egg at all: It is a one-celled embryo known as a zygote.) At one time such a defense would have been unnecessary. Embryology and basic biology textbooks clearly taught the simple scientific truth that human life begins at conception. But then along came the abortion debate and the potential to garner medical and scientific benefits from the instrumental use of the earliest embryos, and that which was once deemed biologically uncontroversial suddenly became the subject of heated debate.

After discussing the mechanics by which the sperm and egg merge and in the process are subsumed into the embryo, George and Tollefsen identify the biological nature of the new entity that has thus come into existence:

> A human embryo is not something different in kind from a human being, like a rock, or a potato, or a rhinoceros. A human embryo is a whole living member of the species Homo sapiens, in the earliest stage of his or her natural development. Unless severely damaged or denied or deprived of a suitable environment, an embryonic human being will, by directing its own integral organic functioning, develop himself or herself to the next more mature developmental stage, i.e. fetal stage. The embryonic, fetal, child, and adolescent stages *are just that*—stages in the development of a determinate and enduring entity—a human being—who comes into existence as a single-celled organism (a zygote) and develops, if all goes well, into adulthood many years later.

New and novel definitions of embryos exist, of course, and the authors rebut them all. For example, some claim that the embryo doesn't arise until it implants in a uterus. But this is, biologically, nonsense. Implantation doesn't make a new entity that did not exist previously; fertilization does. Implantation merely enables the embryo to remain in a suitable environment for continued growth via the soon-to-come creation of its first vital organ—namely, the placenta. Nor is the embryo merely a bunch of cells equivalent to a mole before implantation, as other advocates assert. It's a fully integrated and self-sustaining organism that begins developing from the moment it comes into being.

Having proved that the human embryo is indeed human life, the authors readily acknowledge that the biology of the matter does not settle the moral question. Indeed, establishing moral worth is not a job for science, but belongs rightly in the realms of philosophy and morality, areas of analysis to which they devote the balance of the book.

In tackling these matters, the authors present a good mini-seminar on "dualism," which holds that "the kind of being we are" is "substantially different from the human organism" itself. For example, the authors explain that the beliefs of utilitarian bioethicists assert a "person-body" dualism, that is, they separate the biological human organism from the moral entity—the person—with only the latter having true value. Others, following in the intellectual footsteps of Plato, perceive a soul-body dualism. Descartes and his philosophical progeny assert the presence of a mind-body dualism (I think, therefore I am). And some distinguish the brain from the body, with the moral value of our beings centered in our frontal lobes.

The authors reject dualism in all its forms. And this leads them to their moral conclusion, which can be very briefly summarized as follows: "We are by nature," they write, "human animals," by which they mean to say that we are "bodily beings." This means we have a unitary, not dual, nature. This nature is, among other attributes, rational. As a consequence, unlike any other species, we also are persons from the moment we come into existence. And it is our intrinsic personhood that gives each of our lives intrinsic value from its beginning until the very end. The authors write:

> It seems to us that the natural human capacities for reason and freedom are fundamental to the dignity of human beings—the dignity that is protected by human rights. The basic goods of human nature are the goods of a rational creature, a creature who, unless impaired or prevented from doing so, naturally develops capacities for deliberation, judgment, and choice. These capacities are godlike (in a limited way, or course) . . . the power to be an uncaused causing. This is the power to envisage a possible state of affairs, to grasp the value of bringing it into being, and then to act by choice, and not merely impulse or instinct, to bring it into being.

To which their detractors will sniff: So what? While most human beings exhibit these capacities at any given time—and hence have the moral value that George and Tollefsen attribute to all human beings—not all members of the species Homo sapiens are so capable. Early embryos have no brain or nervous system, for example, and fetuses are not consciously aware. Some human beings who have lived personal existences lose these capacities. And when they do, they lose the value conveyed by personhood.

Not so fast, George and Tollefsen rejoin. Our value is objective, not subjective. Each of us possesses a "human nature," as a "rational animal." Our dignity doesn't depend on the capacities of the individual, and personhood is not something we acquire along the way. It comes with the package, meaning our

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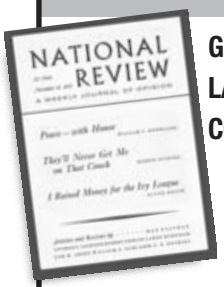

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entire species is steeped in dignity and moral value, attributes that are intrinsic to *our very nature* as human beings. The fact that some of us have not yet developed, or have lost, our natural capacities is thus irrelevant to our moral status.

Moreover, understanding and accepting this philosophical point is *the* condition precedent to the recognition of universal human rights. This seems incapable of refutation. After all, if each of us has to earn his value moment-by-moment—as personhood theorists would have it—then universal human rights become oxymoronic, since our respective value is relative to our capacities at any given time.

Having demonstrated forcefully that the human embryo is biologically a human being from the moment of conception, and having strongly argued that every human being is ipso facto a person, the authors draw some important conclusions: All innocent human beings have a right to life; destructive embryonic-stem-cell research and human cloning are wrong, because they violate the bodily integrity and right to life of the nascent human person. Even though these biotechnological techniques could lead to scientific advancement and potential medical treatments, the authors assert (quoting Kant) that each of us must always be considered an end, never a means.

There remains the question of abortion. Some readers may be disappointed to learn that the authors generally leave it alone; but sufficient for each day are its own troubles. The emotional and incendiary nature of the abortion debate—the arguments on both sides of which everyone knows by heart—would have simply overwhelmed the delicately nuanced and generally neglected philosophical territory explored in *Embryo*. The authors were wise to leave that discussion for another book.

Powerful forces seek to knock human life off of the pedestal of exceptionalism. Many who stand against the resulting cultural riptide have too often struggled to mount a scientifically valid, entirely secular, and philosophically coherent rebuttal. This important task just became much easier with the publication of George and Tollefsen's *Embryo*, an important and powerful contribution in "defense of human life." **NR**

Idée Fixe

Takeover: The Return of the Imperial Presidency and the Subversion of American Democracy, by Charlie Savage (Little, Brown, 416 pp., $25.99)

ANDREW C. McCARTHY

THE winning side writes the history. For now, Charlie Savage is on the winning side, and considerably more commends him than just that fortuity.

The *Boston Globe*'s Pulitzer Prize–winning legal-affairs correspondent is an energetic reporter and a lucid writer. A graduate of Yale Law School, he possesses an unusual depth in the legal arcana that have come to dominate today's national-security debate. Moreover, his relentless, exquisitely researched new book has won plaudits from both sides of the ideological divide, from Harvard's Laurence Tribe to the estimable George Will.

Savage, nevertheless, has a serious flaw: He is obsessed with Dick Cheney. The vice president is Darth Vader—the root of all evil, and the cartoonish one-size-fits-all explanation behind every controversy, complexities notwithstanding. For now, this is no problem: Savage's bias is shared by the mainstream media, the academic elite, and the resurgent Left. In the short term, its poisonous effect on this accounting will be blithely overlooked. Over time, however, as the heat of our present dementia gives way to less virulent assessments, it will marginalize this book. And that's too bad—because, whether one agrees with it or not (for what it's worth, I disagree with a lot of it), Savage has a case to make, and he makes much of it with considerable persuasive force.

Though he would no doubt reject the designation, the author is a legislative

Mr. McCarthy directs the Center for Law & Counterterrorism at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

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supremacist. In his view, the Framers were so "bent on ensuring" that the presidency they crafted "would not get out of control and become a king" that they vested Congress not merely with competing powers but with elaborate authority to limit presidential prerogatives by regulation. Savage writes:

> The Constitution gave Congress the power to pass laws setting all the "rules and regulations" it deemed "necessary and proper" for *the execution of presidential powers*. The executive branch, in turn, was *charged with obeying these rules*. If the president did not like the laws, he could veto them, but Congress could override a veto with a supermajority vote. And the Founders specifically took away from the executive the power to take the country to war—a chief provenance of the British king—leaving presidents the power to repel sudden attacks only without first getting the assent of Congress. (Emphasis added.)

The Framers were also determined, he maintains, to deprive the president of the "prerogative power" enjoyed by the British sovereign to refrain in the public interest from enforcing parliamentary statutes.

This legislative supremacism is the regnant theory of American democracy in today's academy, for whose scholars the Pentagon Papers, Watergate, and the Church Committee hearings are defining historical episodes. With executive power held in ill repute, Savage benefits from being a particularly strong expostulator of the conventional wisdom—which the book offers as a marked contrast to the "imperial presidency" championed by Cheney and a coterie of like-minded officials strategically stationed throughout the administration.

For Savage, the imperial presidency (also characterized as the "subversion of American democracy" and plain old "tyranny") is a monstrosity that has reared its head periodically—usually in wartime, as presidents capitalized on exigency and public fear to ride roughshod over institutional checks and balances. Cheney is the villain of the piece because, Savage argues, he came to the White House as a man on a mission. He had been a top Nixon official and was later enraged, while serving as President Gerald Ford's chief of staff, by Congress's dismantling of executive prerogatives. So Cheney was hell-bent as vice president on restoring presidential power to its Nixonian imperial apex. He was not waiting for 9/11 to happen—though he zoomed into overdrive when it did.

Savage's conception of government, however, is no more satisfying than what he takes to be Cheney's. His description of the constitutional scheme is grossly oversimplified. Article I's Necessary and Proper Clause does not mention presidential powers at all, much less enable Congress extensively to regulate "the execution of presidential powers." It refers generally to Congress's own enumerated powers and, to the extent it bears on "other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States," it is a means of removing unwarranted obstacles, not of vitiating the powers themselves. The Clause, like Congress's rule-making authorities spelled out in Article I, must be read in conjunction with, and due deference to, the powers created elsewhere in our founding law.

The power to regulate is the power to destroy. The Framers, as Savage contends, surely did not want a king. But the author's recounting is woefully incomplete. He is deeply critical, for example, of the "presidentialists'" reliance on *Federalist 70*, in which Hamilton champions the "unity" of the executive (i.e., the determination to concentrate formidable presidential powers in a single official), because they too often ignore *Federalist 69*, in which Hamilton clarifies that the commander-in-chief's authority is "much inferior" to the war powers of the British king. Savage himself, however, ignores the selfsame Hamilton's admonition, in *Federalist 73*, against "the propensity of the legislative department to intrude upon the rights, and to absorb the powers, of the other departments."

This is a rather typical omission by Savage. Here's another: Savage, unsurprisingly, makes much of the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), by which the post–Church Committee Congress undertook to limit presidential power to eavesdrop on foreign agents operating inside the U.S. For Savage, FISA is a congressional enactment; therefore, presidents are "charged with obeying" it. The Bush administration (or, as Savage incessantly puts it lest we miss the point, the Bush-Cheney administration) thus subverted American democracy by authorizing the NSA's Terrorist Surveillance Program, a wartime initiative that secretly dispensed with FISA's judicial-warrant requirement. Yet Savage conveniently elides an equally important congressional enactment: the original 1968 federal wiretap law, in which Congress expressly disclaimed any right to

*THE TEMPLE OF THE MIND**

Illusion: imagined, a closed universe,
a fiction, a shadow, a glittering mask:
to feign a deception clearer than life,
to create out of nothing pure artifice.
Incessant elaborate projection of myth—
travesty, mask, the carnival guise;
to rid the conventional flesh of its guilt,
proclaim the organic kinship of wine
in the licentious head of a goat or faun.
Deception in insects, animals, birds,
exhibits of vanity in males and females—
rare application—delight in the guise,
all playing a part in the nuptial parade;
caprices of color, motion—inspiring love
of the beauteous thing in love with itself.

* A painting by Albert Ryder, 1847-1917.

—RICHARD O'CONNELL

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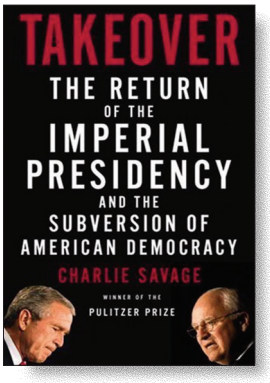
interfere with the "constitutional power of the President to take such measures as he deems necessary to protect the Nation against actual or potential attack . . . [and] to obtain foreign intelligence information deemed essential to the security of the United States." So was Congress right in 1968, or in 1978? And, more to the point, can it be the case that presidential power is controlled by such legislative whims rather than the objective parameters of Article II?

Savage's critique fails in three principal ways. First, it is plagued by the ideologue's tendency to oversimplify. The author is correct that the administration has been too secretive. On crucial issues such as interrogation tactics, the detention and trial of enemy combatants, and intelligence collection, it has exhibited a disturbing preference for internal deliberation and unilateral diktat. As former Bush Justice Department official Jack Goldsmith contends in *The Terror Presidency*, a more sober analysis also published in 2007, the administration would probably have gotten most of what it wanted, and left the institution of the presidency on firmer footing, if it had collaborated more with Congress. Nevertheless, Savage conveys a sense of neither the partisan hostility toward Bush after the 2000 election, nor the complexities and urgency of an unprecedented type of war against a non-state enemy that thrives on information surrendered under our generous disclosure laws, and against which intelligence is the only real defense.


TAKEOVER
THE RETURN OF THE IMPERIAL PRESIDENCY AND THE SUBVERSION OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY
CHARLIE SAVAGE
WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

He is, relatedly, given too easily to rhetorical excess. Denying Geneva Convention protections to al-Qaeda and using tough interrogation tactics, for both of which there were strong legal arguments, did not mean the administration believed "there were no binding laws and treaties about torture anymore." And "the rule of law" has never meant "the president is bound to obey existing statutes and treaties unless and until he can persuade Congress to rescind them"—presidents have always claimed executive enforcement discretion and the power to ignore unconstitutional statutes (just as courts claim the power to overrule them); and presidents have never, contrary to Savage's unsupported assertion, required congressional approval to rescind treaties.

Second, the author adheres to the popular fallacy that the Framers intended the political branches to solve their inevitable skirmishes through law rather than politics. "The great ordinances of the Constitution," Holmes observed, "do not establish and divide fields of black and white." Powers ebb and flow with circumstances, and the Framers gave Congress several political tools, up to and including impeachment, to respond to presidential overreach. American democracy was not conceived as rule by the courts, either.

Finally and foremost, Savage's Cheney obsession skews his analysis. The book oddly begins with the vice president, in the frenzy of 9/11, communicating an order to shoot down suspect planes. The president was in transit, and Savage's point is that a vice president has no authority to issue such an order. Fine, but even if you buy Savage's contention, there was nothing inappropriate or imperious about such an order's being issued by the executive branch during an attack. The story advances the narrative only by besmirching Cheney. The pattern continues as Savage diverts to an unflattering portrait of Cheney's youth: his lackluster academic career, drinking binges, and the unsavory suggestion—notwithstanding Cheney's inarguable devotion as a husband and father—that his marriage and the birth of his first child were timed to avoid military service.

And so it goes, so unbecoming and so unnecessary. For the open-minded, the animus is glaringly transparent. The Bush administration has made mistakes. Its failure to articulate and persuade the public of its vision of national security in an era of jihadist violence will leave the presidency weaker—the opposite of what Cheney hoped. But the bile Savage directs at Cheney cannot conceal what even the author occasionally concedes has been the proclivity of presidents from John Adams through Bill Clinton to flex executive muscles in times of crisis. More detached historians, I suspect, will acknowledge the comparative tameness of the Bush-Cheney record. **NR**

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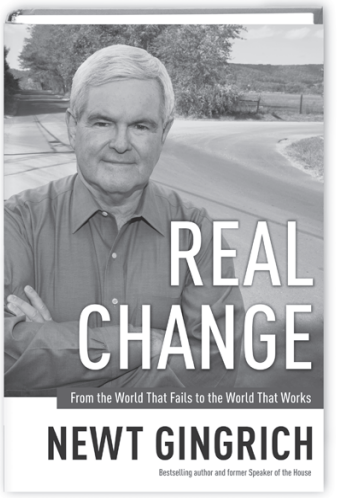
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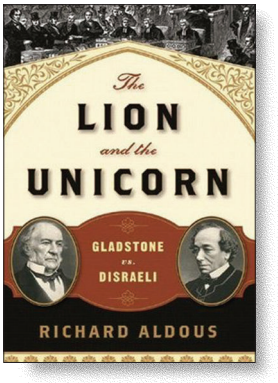

The Lion and the Unicorn: Gladstone vs. Disraeli, by Richard Aldous (Norton, 368 pp., $27.95)

ARTHUR HERMAN

"Every boy and every gal / That's born into the world alive / Is either a little Liberal / Or else a little Conservative." The bifurcated world thus summarized in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* was the creation of two men, Benjamin Disraeli and William Gladstone. They are the subjects of this engaging and gracefully written book. Why should Americans care about the rivalry between two British politicians who died more than a century ago? Because the events described in this book remind us of an important and timely truth—i.e., that partisan politics, even at its most bitter, usually has little impact on the dull business of running a great power. In fact, the cleverer the politician, the more a great issue—whether it be Irish home rule or the War on Terror—becomes a tool for use instead of a problem to be solved.

Certainly Disraeli and Gladstone were two of the cleverest men ever to enter politics. They were also among the strangest.

Mr. Herman is the author of *To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World*. His new book on Gandhi and Churchill will be published by Bantam in May.

William Gladstone began as a reactionary Tory, rather as Hillary Clinton started out as a Goldwater girl. His very first political speech was a blast against the Reform Bill of 1832—even though the bill virtually created the Liberal party, of which he would become the greatest leader. Over a nearly 60-year career, Gladstone's deep evangelical Christianity moved him steadily to the progressive Left. He would become prime minister not once but four times—although the more his policies reflected his true convictions, as in the case of home rule for Ireland, the more ineffectual he was in realizing them.

Benjamin Disraeli was a baptized Christian, but barely English in blood. His perfumed, exotic appearance (false rumors floated about that he was homosexual) and his constant references to his Jewish heritage grated on the Tory country squires, who nonetheless followed him four separate times as their leader in the House of Commons. He did not become prime minister with a Conservative majority until he was 69.

Between them, Disraeli and Gladstone created the face of modern politics. Their rivalry played out in the years when England finally ceased to be a nation of broad acres and became one of factory smokestacks, suburbs, and railway stations, while the electorate swelled from barely one in five Englishmen to something within hailing distance of manhood suffrage, together with a secret ballot. In England, by Gladstone's death in 1898 only the male who did not pay for the roof over his head was still left out.

New voters meant a new politics. For the 1868 election against Gladstone, Disraeli set up the Conservative Central Office, with branches around the country, to recruit candidates to stand for office. It told them what issues they were to address, and what to say: the beginning of the modern political party. For the 1880 general election Gladstone campaigned around the country with a series of stump speeches. It was the first time a British prime minister had ever appealed to voters directly, although American presidents and presidential candidates had been doing so for some time.

Above all, Gladstone and Disraeli reduced modern democratic politics to the current struggle for power between two parties. The object became winning elections and holding office, rather than driving the other side off the field. "I live for power," Disraeli once said, "and the affections." Early on, he decided he could even do without the latter. Great issues existed primarily as a way to mobilize the electorate, and to keep his party at "the top of the greasy pole."

His Conservatives were the party whose reputation rested on restricting the electorate, yet it was Disraeli who proposed and passed the Second Reform Act in 1867. He ripped Palmerston for supporting the Turkish Empire during the Crimean War, then did the same as prime minister 20 years later. He claimed that Gladstone and the Liberals wanted to defang the British monarchy—and Queen Victoria believed him; yet it was Disraeli who forced the Crown out of politics and reduced it to a shadowy figurehead.

Gladstone was more sincere, sometimes oppressively so ("he speaks to me," Queen Victoria famously complained, "as if I were a public meeting"). Yet Gladstone soon learned that his best successes as Liberal leader came by opposing whatever was proposed by Mr. Disraeli, such as intervening in Egypt; and Disraeli came to a similar conclusion. In the end, novelist Anthony Trollope summed them up best as "the two gladiators": "The men are so near to each other in all their convictions and theories of life that nothing is left to them but personal competition for the doing of the thing that is to be done."

At the time, and as Professor Aldous's book emphasizes, the battle between Disraeli and Gladstone seemed a clash of titans, with titanic issues at stake. Yet, just 40 years after Disraeli's death in 1881, the Great War and the Russian Revolution made their Victorian era appear in retrospect the epitome of continuity and stability. The Great Depression and World War II would only reinforce this impression.

Historians may well see the Bush-Clinton years the same way. Despite the bitter partisanship and human drama, these past two decades of Bush and Clinton rule (or quarter-century, if Hillary gives us a Clinton third term) reflect a sustained if volatile consensus on how to deal with the world and with America's problems at home. For better or worse, even 9/11 hasn't been able to disguise the fact that we live in an era of unprecedented continuity and stability compared to the Cold War storms that led us here, and the possible calamities to come. **NR**

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■ FILM ■

Well, Well, Well

ROSS DOUTHAT

You won't find a film more self-consciously ambitious than Paul Thomas Anderson's *There Will Be Blood* in cinemas this winter. Hailed, near-universally, as the masterpiece that Anderson's admirers have long expected him to produce, the movie certainly looks the part. At 2 hours and 38 minutes, it has the necessary heft. It has the sprawling canvas—a barren, mountainous turn-of-the-century California, whose pre-irrigation grandeur evokes the Old Testament and the Old West, D. W. Griffith and John Ford. And it has a volcanic, transfixing lead performance—from Daniel Day-Lewis, draped in a mustache and grinding out his syllables like John Huston—that conjures up a mad, bad protagonist to rival Melville's Ahab, or Orson Welles's Charles Foster Kane.

What it doesn't have, unfortunately, is a third act. Everything about *There Will Be Blood*, from its title to its doomy, keening soundtrack to its pseudo-Biblical trappings, promises a story that builds and builds and builds to an epic, blood-and-thunder climax. The movie's finale has blood, sure enough, but it spills out in a closing scene that's lurching and implausible—a tacked-on flash-forward that leaves you feeling as if Anderson, having let his story unspool leisurely for most of the film, realized that he didn't have time for a closing movement and decided to just hit a sharp note and call it quits.

The conclusion looks particularly misbegotten in contrast with how the film begins—patiently, quietly, and mesmerizingly, in a near-silent 20-minute sequence that carries Day-Lewis's Daniel Plainview from the cramped silver mine where we first encounter him, an oversize goblin tearing at the earth from below, through his first oil strike and then the drilling accident that leaves an orphan baby as his ward. From this opening the film flashes forward, from 1902 to 1911, by which time Plainview has established himself as a well-known "oil man," rattling around the countryside in a Tin Lizzie with his adopted son H.W. (Dillon Freasier) in tow, talking townsfolk beset by poverty and greed into leasing him their newfound wells to drain. He's prospering, but he isn't yet so rich that he can afford to turn away a soft-voiced young man named Paul Sunday (Paul Dano), who promises—for a mere $500—to set Plainview on the scent of an untapped field that's bubbling up from below the Sunday family's unproductive land.

This is the last we see of Paul. Plainview pays him off and heads for the Sunday ranch, where he finds a pious farm family with a talented son named Eli (Dano, again) who appears to be Paul's twin—though of course the oil man, pretending to have stumbled on the ranch by accident, is in no position to ask. Dano has a strange and arresting look, like a clay statue taken too early from the kiln, with a soft face and a weak nose and an odd, malleable cast to his skin. His Eli is a preacher, with a hard-scrabble start-up parish called the Church of the Third Revelation, and he's set up to be Plainview's foil—God to his Mammon, though of course his godliness is more or less a fraud—and his great antagonist in the drama that develops. Dano gives an interesting performance, though ultimately I think he is miscast, or else the character is misconceived: He's supposed to be a faith healer and a fire-and-brimstone preacher, but he resembles Uriah Heep more than Elmer Gantry—crafty and insinuating, without any of the charisma and even sex appeal that's required from an evangelist on the make.

Daniel Day-Lewis in There Will Be Blood

This is a flaw in the film, but not a fatal one, and for a time it's overwhelmed by the mercurial energy of Day-Lewis's performance and the sweep of Anderson's vision. The oil business, with its wild landscapes and rearing wells, its pillars of oil and fire, is the world's most cinematic industry, and *There Will Be Blood* makes the most of it—not just in the big set-piece sequences, but in the way the backdrop of red flame and black gold and dark satanic derricks makes every intimate moment, every fragmentary conversation, seem freighted with all the terrible significance of the King James Bible.

Only a few relationships matter in the movie, and they all have a primal simplicity: the mirror-imaging of Plainview and Eli, the father-son bond between Plainview and H.W., the twinning of the Sunday brothers, and the maybe-so-maybe-not fraternal link between Plainview and his "brother by another mother" (Kevin J. O'Connor), who shows up midway through the film, drawn by the news of his supposed sibling's wealth.

The film seems to share its protagonist's jaundiced view of God: that He's "a superstition," as Plainview puts it, and anyone who says otherwise is "a false prophet." But Anderson—with an assist from Upton Sinclair, whose novel *Oil!* provided the loose basis for the script—has produced a story that owes an awful lot to Genesis; he's just edited Yahweh (and the women) out.

The result is a film that critics will be chewing over for years, because *There Will Be Blood* is made for them to chew on: It's sprawling and seething and deliberately over-the-top, elliptical and elemental, shot through with a singular vision that's visible, for good or ill, in every single frame. Whether it's a successful movie is another question, and I'm inclined to answer no. If its weakest part were its beginning, rather than its end, I might feel differently, but as it stands *There Will Be Blood* seems like a tragedy that skips the falling action—if it were Shakespeare, it would be missing its Act IV and half of V—and asks the audience to fill in too many blanks. I believe in where Daniel Plainview begins, I believe in where he finishes up, and I accept that the character Day-Lewis and Anderson have fashioned might remain essentially unknowable no matter what was shown happening between his beginning and his end. But I wanted more from this movie even so, and I think a true masterpiece—as opposed to this fascinating, dazzling, deeply flawed epic—would have given it to me. **NR**

MIRAMAX

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■ CITY DESK ■

Mainlining

RICHARD BROOKHISER

Last year the Metropolitan Transit Authority announced that you will soon be able to use your cell phone in all 277 underground subway stations, even the ones that are a hundred feet deep in granite. Tunnels are supposed to be out of service, out of consideration for subway riders, but that too will no doubt change. Then you will be free from any interaction uncontrolled by yourself.

I rode 24 miles on the city's rails one day, back and forth from the Bronx to Wall Street, with a lot of business at either end. The amount of time I spent in transit threw me together with an unusual number of random fellow passengers.

The first stop of north-bound commuter trains after leaving Grand Central Terminal is 125th Street in Harlem. Two decades ago I went to 125th Street to hear Jesse Jackson speak, and afterwards I was the only white face heading home. "You sightseeing?" a passerby asked. Now most of the faces getting on at 9 A.M. were white. The pioneering gentry, as is so often the case, are gays. Soon the neighborhood will be as light as Adam Clayton Powell. On the East Side, 125th Street is also close to Spanish Harlem, and there two youngish Mexican men got on. They did not seem related, for although both were short one was quite a bit smaller than the other, almost a boy but for the leanness of his look. No construction workers these; more likely some restaurant's kitchen crew, though if they were heading to a regular gig, wouldn't they have been familiar with the train schedule? When the ticket taker, a middle-aged black man, came down the aisle, he found that they had off-peak fares, though we were still in rush hour. The smaller Mexican man acted as the negotiator; he spoke English badly, which was evidently better than his friend, who spoke not at all. Patiently the ticket taker made himself understood. He told them that they were to get off at the next station and wait half an hour for the first off-peak train. Time and futility are the taxes laid on ignorance. The rate is often low, but the transactions are numerous. The smaller man wore a Yankees cap, the silent man a cap that said I ♥ JESUS.

At my stop in the Bronx a man was vomiting off the platform. I did not notice much about him for it is not polite to look. He was not acutely ill, for he stood sturdily, and he had enough sensibility to vomit off the back edge, against the embankment, rather than onto the tracks. It was not privacy, but it was the best he could contrive in the circumstances. The only time I threw up in public was before singing at a resort, after the dinner that had been laid on for the entertainers. The wines had been various, and the business manager of our singing group had distributed cigars the size of chair legs. But though I was taken suddenly, while walking from one building to another, I managed to step aside into the bushes. Some actions, many of them involving liquids, defy prying eyes. Those who are privy to them *ex officio*—nurses, lovers—acquire thereby an almost magical power that must stem from our recollections of our mothers, who teach us what living in society requires, but who are nevertheless above and beyond the laws they lay down, willing and entitled to clean up our messes. Of course the retiring vomiter may simply have been afraid of being hustled along if he was too blatant. But this is New York; even after eight years of Giuliani and six of Bloomberg there was no authority in sight.

At the other end of the city, I looked at a college campus, a graveyard, a bar, and the New York Fed; I was scouting sites for a documentary. Scouting is like hunting; you know what you're after, but the game can pop up anywhere. I kept going with coffee at a White Castle, lunch at a deli, and another coffee in a Borders. Late in the afternoon, my producer and I started a hare. A piece of subway art—a view of King's College, now Columbia, in its 18th-century location, west of City Hall—might illustrate a point. My producer grew up, and I live, in the midtown grid, which is orderly and right-angled both below and above ground. But as Manhattan shrinks to its southern tip, subway lines tangle in their search for Brooklyn. We lost our way; we asked directions at a token booth, and a transit worker opened a locked gate to lead us to the right line. (A free ride: In 80 combined years of New York living, we had never had such a thing.) Riding on the new line, we still strap-hung over the subway map in the car, squinting to orient ourselves. On the seat beneath us sat a man and a woman. They might have been siblings; they certainly showed brotherly/sisterly affection. How do we say retarded today? What will we be ashamed, 20 years from now, of having said? Their foreheads bulged slightly; they leaned their heads together. They were observant, though, and helpful. They told us where we were headed, and what the next stop was. The man noticed the digital camera hanging from my producer's neck (I take notes with a pen; he shoots them). "Be careful with your camera," the man warned, friendly but serious. "This is New York." Krishna told Arjuna on the battlefield not to fare well, but to fare forward. We were told to do both.

The man noticed the digital camera. 'Be careful with your camera,' he warned, friendly but serious. 'This is New York.'

The subject of the documentary is Alexander Hamilton, but the secondary subject may be the city that he and I moved to. He loved it as an engine of economic opportunity; I love it as an opportunity to see people, and to be seen by them. Be care-ful; this is New York. NR

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NEW YORK, JANUARY 4

It's wonderful what a mere American presidential caucus contest can do. Gov. Bill Richardson, interviewed after the Iowa caucuses, said that his ranking in the vote must be understood in the light of the parsimony of his campaign. "I didn't come here, like some of my brothers, just loaded with cash." What did he come loaded with? Enough appeal to entice the caucus voters to give him 53 delegates to the Iowa state convention.

Was he the last in line? No no, do not take that away from Christopher Dodd. He likes to point out his disposition to embrace lost causes. Well, his lost cause in Iowa amounted to a hair over 0 percent of the vote, amounting to one delegate.

And it didn't require neglect by the press to effect alienation from the voters. Rudy Giuliani showed up with a burning city on his back, a single fire hose in his hand. He did better than Richardson, gaining 3.5 percent of Republican votes, as opposed to Richardson's 2.1 percent of Democratic votes. But, as someone remarked, he shouldn't be lonely, he has all those wives to return to.

Above the ranks of sheer rejection came the players, among them Mitt Romney and Mike Huckabee. Their principal attraction, to the voters of Iowa in 2008, is their insubstantiality. Huckabee is the candidate whose name you practice pronouncing because you thought up until now that he was a character in one of Mark Twain's novels. Some voters may have suspected that that is exactly what he in fact is, and wished to help in his road to incarnation.

But there was real poignancy in the middle group. John McCain made it to 13 percent, but that is losers' territory, and he might have preferred to come in with his senatorial colleague Mr. Dodd. If there was sadness in Iowa when the votes were counted, much of it must have been over the rebuke to McCain. And there can have been only a single reason for it, namely his defense of the Iraq War. Many of the candidates spoke of the Iraq enterprise as a historic pitfall in American history. If it was indeed that, then our legislatures and statehouses are simply teeming with men and women of abject vision, because five years ago, the march against Baghdad was endorsed, openly or silently, by the majority of our public citizens. History would have been grateful for a poll on Thursday registering names of public men and women who endorsed the war. Perhaps they stayed away, or voted for Dodd.

It was a day of defiance. When aberrancy is sought, Americans are good at coming up with it. There are of course galleries of the stuff, carefully tended and regularly exhibited, on Broadway, in the movie houses, and at Disneyland. But when the visitors pass through the portals again, going out, their souvenirs tend to be wholesome, as if they had just come back from voting for the surge.

The big winner was an affront to the common wisdom that looks matter most in the age of television. The dissenters were bound to support a homely man, and they found him on the Democratic side, giving Barack Obama 37.6 percent of their vote. Mr. Obama could think of himself as in the category of Abraham Lincoln. But he does Abe Lincoln one better by having a name that sounds as if he were on the playbill as the man who will bind the beautiful lady to the rails on which the great express will ride. Compare John Edwards. He is movie-star handsome, distinguishable only by his superfine haircut and Southern accent. He took 29.7 percent of the vote, nosing out Mrs. Clinton, who had 29.5 percent, and who had gone to Iowa hoping for victory.

Well, Iowa accomplished quite a lot, in politics and in theater.

Pakistan's Blood-Stained Democracy

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 28

LALLY WEYMOUTH of *Newsweek* did a brilliant article published two weeks before the assassination. She was in close quarters with Benazir Bhutto and then with President Musharraf. Neither one of them said anything apocalyptic, and certainly there was no indication that poised in those conventional words was the gleam of the assassin, or the fright of a victim bound. In short, from the two principals, there were no big surprises.

But Ms. Weymouth's questions were not banal, and Musharraf rewarded her with a singular frankness. This came early in the interview, when Ms. Weymouth asked him, "Do you feel you stuck your neck out for the United States after September 11 and the United States has not stood by you?" One yearns to write that the following words were "spat out," but that much can only be inferred:

"No, I don't. I stuck out my neck for Pakistan. I didn't stick out my neck for anyone else. It happened to be in the interest of the world and the U.S. . . . The problem with the West and your media is your obsession with democracy, civil liberties, human rights. You think your definition of all these things is [correct]. . . . Who has built democratic institutions in Pakistan? I have done it in the last eight years."

Musharraf cited, as an example of the bias against which he works, the coverage by the Western media of the violence at the Islamabad mosque last summer: "We took action. What did the media do about it? They showed those who took action as villains and brought those madwomen who were there on television and made heroes of them."

Weymouth then asked the sacred question: "Do you feel you could work with Benazir Bhutto?"

Musharraf: "When you talk of working with her, you imply she is going to be the prime minister. Why do you imply that? I keep telling everyone we haven't had the elections."

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"Mrs. Bhutto charges that there are going to be ghost polling stations—that the voting is going to be rigged."

This brought real asperity: "Let her not treat everyone like herself. . . . I am not like her. I don't believe in these things. Where's her sense of democracy when 57 percent of the Parliament vote for me, and she says she is not prepared to work with me?"

Why, the interviewer asked Ms. Bhutto, are the terrorists so strong in Pakistan? Is it because there is support for them from the government?

Ms. Bhutto: "Yes, I am shocked to see how embedded it [terrorism] is. I knew it was bad from afar. People are scared to talk. They say I am polarizing when I say militancy is a problem."

Two weeks later the lead story in the *New York Times* spoke of our policy as "left in ruins." Nothing remained of "the delicate diplomatic effort the Bush administration had pursued in the past year to reconcile Pakistan's deeply divided political factions." Another *Times* reporter spoke of "the new challenge" the assassination posed to the Bush administration in its effort "to stabilize a front-line state" in the "fight against terrorism."

There are reasons to object to the repository of blame in the Bhutto situation. To the charge that there was insufficient security in Rawalpindi, nothing more needs to be said than that—yes: Manifestly there was insufficient security, as there was at Ford's Theatre in 1865, Dealey Plaza in 1963, and the hundred other places in America where mayhem has been wrought. We cannot know with any confidence just what it is that the Pakistanis have to come up with to make safe the niceties of democracy about which Musharraf speaks with understandable scorn.

The scantest knowledge of Pakistani and Muslim history challenges the fatuity that this is a corner of the political world where public life can proceed with no more concern for militant interruption than would be expected in the House of Lords.

The Bush administration should announce to the waiting world that the U.S. cannot be charged with responsibility for maintaining order in Pakistan, and does not accept responsibility for the assassination of Benazir Bhutto.

Regulation Time?

NEW YORK, JANUARY 2

Social critics are despondent over the failure absolutely to fix blame on somebody for the terrible subprime-mortgage phenomenon. There's the temptation to blame a phenomenon judged to be malicious, or at best thoughtless, on an institutional feature of the free-market system. Jared Bernstein of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington cites a pressing need for regulation, the invisible hand of the marketplace having failed us.

It is useful to remind ourselves that the market does not pose as, or at least ought not to pose as, an executor of justice. If John and Jim, apparently equally endowed and equally motivated, launch identical business enterprises and John succeeds while Jim fails, one can't look to the market to weigh the two entrepreneurs by meritocratic standards. The market can't judge what role sheer luck played in the different outcomes. Free-market theory intervenes only to say that Jim, the loser, should himself bear the costs of failure.

As opposed to what?

Well, as opposed to taxing John from his earnings sufficiently to compensate Jim for his failure. The market seeks simply to individuate the winner and the loser. Interventionists are moved by a desire to temper the judgments of the marketplace, and the way to do this is: by regulation.

Regulation in some form or other is almost everywhere licensed and, generally, applauded. If competitors run taxi companies, regulation denies to any one of them an exclusive franchise: Do not seek to eliminate the competition. And there is regulation built into progressive taxation: The winner climbs into a higher tax bracket, and is thus burdened to the advantage (in the short term) of the competitor.

The mortgage crisis came on because our free society did not think to intervene at a juncture where it could have limited the effects of cosmic thoughtlessness and insouciant greed. So that the question now arises: How does society single out the gross violators, meting out punishment to those who deserve it without harming others? Is it possible to identify the guilty parties?

This family desires a house, but cannot not afford a mortgage based on conventional factors. A friendly mortgage broker emerges. He will arrange for them to get a mortgage at an easygoing rate. The lender will agree to this because, immediately on writing the mortgage, he will sell his interest in this family and their house to yet another party, who bundles it with similar mortgages and sells slices of the package to various investors. And so a great pool of mortgages accumulates, banked away in every corner of the financial house, a bit of everybody's portfolio who has an interest in the financial order.

What the market would do, facing that situation, is to impose punishment on the disorderly mortgage brokers and lenders. But where are they? They are almost universally out of sight. They didn't linger over the worthless mortgages; they passed them on to buyers who have been waking up during the past six months bereft of assets they thought they had.

If we could start from scratch, we might have managed a federal regulation that forbade giving mortgages to people without an adequate credit history. But we cannot do that in retrospect, so we are in mid-quandary, with foreclosures lowering the values of all houses, not just the ones with risky mortgages. Is there a market for, say, 30 million American homes?

The politics of the matter are at least this clear. The federal government being the only agent that can possibly intervene, it needs to do so, by forbidding the liquidation of mortgages until the disparity between true value and hypothetical value is pounded away by time and inflation—and a revitalization of the functions of the marketplace.

—Universal Press Syndicate

"Would you believe I'm following a higher law?"

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

Damn Unity

I USED to support the "candidate of change," but then I changed to the candidate of "change you can believe in," and then I changed back to the "candidate of change" after the candidate changed to being an "agent of change," which sounds very top-secret and groovy. There used to be a British rock band called Status Quo (one would like to think there still is), and, endearingly enough, all their records sounded exactly the same. But no one's using them for a campaign theme this season. Instead, it's one beguiling chorus after another of "Changers in the Night." As the bumper stickers say, "I'm Pro-Change and I Vote." Even my colleague John O'Sullivan penned a column for the *Telegraph* in London headlined "Barack and Huckabee Ride on Wish for Change."

I'm not sure I'd want to ride a wish for change if I needed to get anywhere in a hurry on it. Among the 300 million or so Americans, the ones consumed by a burning desire for meaningful change are the teensiest sliver of a tiny minority. Oh, sure, lots of people would like a quick fix in health care, if there were such a thing, but on most issues large numbers of folks who claim to be pro-change are content with either a meaningless gesture (on the environment) or utter inactivity (on Social Security and everything else). Non–politically active Americans—which is to say most Americans—are broadly content with their country. Even an issue such as illegal immigration, on which ostensibly a huge bipartisan majority of Americans would like real action, doesn't get much traction once the candidates are up there talking about it.

Why? Well, when voters say they want "change," what they really mean is they want nice. If you're not into politics 24/7, it is one of the most unpleasant arenas of American life. Take any other competitive environment and they're using entirely different standards of "meanness"—Simon on *American Idol*, for example, would be a pussycat if you signed him up at Daily Kos. So come presidential nominating season, a big swath of the populace expresses a kind of aesthetic distaste for the entire business by plumping for the freshest face on the national scene—i.e., Obama or Huckabee. Both of them seem nice mainly because they're new. A primary or three later, and they don't seem so new, and don't seem so nice. Politics will do that.

They like him because he looks nice.

Christopher Hitchens likes to say politics is show business for ugly people, but a lot of 'em didn't seem that ugly until 30 years of Sunday morning senatorial talk-show appearances took their toll. Even the fascist mass murderer Bushitler ran eight years ago as an alternative to the stern-faced Gingrich Republicans who'd sat in weekly judgment over the Clinton era. The first President Bush famously offered himself as a "kinder, gentler" alternative to the president he'd just spent eight years with, a pitch so shameless that it worked only because it expressed something very profound—that in settled democracies most people just want something kindler, gentler, nicer, quieter, easier listening. That will be especially true after seven years on Orange Alert.

Which brings us back to why Mister Uniter-Not-A-Divider is ending his term as the most divisive president since the last divisive president. Because to govern is to choose. And to govern in tough times is to make tough choices. And thus to choose is to divide. An electorate that wanted *real* change—on immigration, education, entitlements—would be voting for one almighty four-year slugfest. So instead we wind up with a bit of bipartisan tinkering and drift. That's the lesson of 9/11. It may be "the day the world changed," but in the great federal bureaucracy it was the day nothing changed except a few agency acronyms: Look at the CIA or the State Department or whatever the INS is called this week. To make even the smallest (here's that word again) change—such as, say, requiring passports for visits to Mexico and Canada—takes the best part of a decade.

Do you remember the last time America was "united"? The fall of 2001. Ninety percent approval for Bush. Massive majorities in favor of toppling the Taliban. Didn't last, couldn't last. Because six months go by, and suddenly Afghanistan doesn't seem so easy, and 40 percent bail on the president and decide it's his fault. Unity on anything serious will, almost by definition, be shallow and ephemeral. President Bush learned that the hard way, when history reasserted itself and left its bloody calling card.

What we need is not bogus invocations of unity, which is largely a platitudinous or poll-driven cover for inertia. The president of the United States has to act in a world in which everyone from the bureaucracy to Congress to the EU to the U.N. is urging lethargy. In the days after 9/11, you'll recall that NATO invoked its famous article stating that an attack on one member was an attack on all, but even as the declaration was rolling off the photocopier, various European foreign ministers were saying not to worry, it doesn't mean anything. That's "unity"—unity in the cause of torpor. George W. Bush determined that for once somebody had to mean something, and he acted.

The next president will face that choice, too. By "change," most voters want a restoration of the quiet life. Sorry, that's not an option, no matter what nice young freshman senators promise. **NR**

AP

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